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CONCERNING THE
NATURE
OF THE
PRIESTHOOD.

By the Right Reverend
OSIAH STORY, Lord Bishop of *Killmore*.



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THE Author of this Essay hath kept it by him for about twelve Years past, and shewed it to several learned Divines, who, on the Perusal, either approved it, or, on mature Consideration, made no material Objection to any Part of it; and the Author being so fully convinced of its Truth, thinking it may be of Use to others, and to the Church in general; at least so far as to put Men of Study and Leisure on a more strict Enquiry into a Subject of so great Importance (and, he is afraid, hitherto not fully understood) that he thinks proper to publish it, very ready to receive farther Information, and to own any Mistake, that may be discovered to him.

Dublin,
Dec. 16, 1749.

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CHAP. I.

Of PRIESTHOOD in general.

THE *Jews* seem to have no Word in their Language to answer the Idea we have affixed to Religion; but they expressed the Thing, by the Service or Worship of God. And as this Service, or Worship, is of two Sorts, the inward Veneration of the Mind, and the outward Expressions of that Veneration; the most universal Notion of Priesthood among the Ancients seemeth to be that of *an Order of People set apart to attend these outward Marks of Respect and Veneration paid to the Deity*. St. Paul, pursuant to this Notion, calls them such as *minister to God in holy Things*, or, as the Author to the *Hebrews*, ch. v. 1. describeth an High Priest, as *one ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God, that he may offer both Gifts and Sacrifices for Sins*.

Wherever there was any Sense of Religion, there were some Persons who performed the Office of Priests, by discharging the peculiar Rites and Ceremonies required by it. But it doth not appear, that any particular

ticular Order of Men was set apart for that Office. If we ascend to the early Ages of the World, we shall find that every Man ministered his own holy Things to God for himself, or that the Head of a Family performed that Office for his whole Household. Not that the Office a Priest was annexed or confined to the Master of a Family, or to the First-born. No such Right or Practice appears in History, any more than that they were Kings, and had a natural or divine Right of Monarchy. On the contrary, it is plain from History, that sometimes the Head of a Family, out of a Sense of his Obligation to God and his Family, offered Sacrifices both for himself and his Household; and sometimes private Men performed these holy Rites for themselves.

In the Days of *Adam*, we find *Cain* the elder and *Abel* the younger Brother, offering for themselves Oblations to God of what they possessed; and the younger Brother's accepted before that of the elder, as proceeding from a more pious and sincere Mind; and yet their Father *Adam* was certainly alive; and, for any thing appears to us, they were Members of his Family.

After the Flood, *Noah* ministered as a Priest when he went out of the Ark, *Gen. viii. 20.* And the Lord smelled a sweet Savour, that is, accepted his Oblation. *Abraham* also exercised the same Office, although the youngest Brother: He built an Altar, erected Groves, and called on the Name of the Lord the everlasting God, and offered a Ram for a Burnt-offering. And yet *Abraham* is no where called a Priest, but paid a Deference and Respect to *Melchizedek*, who is known by that Office, *Gen. xii. 8. xxi. 33. xxii. 13. and xiv. 18.*

Jacob also, the younger Brother, in the Life-time of his Father *Isaac*, offered Sacrifice, *Gen. xxxi. 54.* Nor is *Job* ever called a Priest, although he exercised the Office, and offered Sacrifices regularly for himself and his Sons.

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We cannot presume that the Posterity of *Abraham* should live unto the Days of *Moses* in a total Neglect of paying their Homage to God, either by Sacrifice, or some other Acts of Devotion; and yet, during all that Time, they had no such Thing as an Order of Priests, which was not instituted until the Giving of the Law at *Sinai*.

Nor do we find in the Days of *Abraham* any Order of them, through any Part of the East, or in the Land of *Canaan*. Every Man seemeth to have worshipped God, and sacrificed for himself, according to his own Mode. This was the Practice of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*. *Laban* too had his Teraphim, and was his own Priest to his particular Gods. *Balak* and *Balaam* offered their own Burnt-offerings; and no other Priest is mentioned to perform that Office.

Melchizedek is the first Person in that Country who is qualified with the Title of Priest. But there appeareth to be something peculiar in his Case; he had no Predecessors, nor any Successors, until the *Messias*.

Yet at the same Time when no Priests were to be found in the East, there was an Order of them in *Egypt*. In the Days of *Joseph*, we do not only find *Potiphar*, whose true Title was perhaps a Prince, rather than a Priest, but also a whole Order of them, whose Lands were preserved to their Use, when all the other Lands of *Egypt* were sold to the King for Bread.

The Reason why in some Places an Order of Priests was established, and in others every Man officiated for himself and Family, seemeth to be this: That while the Ceremonies of outward Religion were few and simple, every Man was his own Priest; but when Ceremonies were multiplied, and became national, by Consent, Law, or Custom, Men found it convenient to appoint an Order of Priests, whose Business it should be to attend these Ceremonies, inform the People of them, and perform their Sacrifices and other Rites of divine Service. *Diodorus Siculus* giveth

us this Account of the Origin of Priests in *Egypt*; and it is a natural Reason for their Institution in other Countries. The *Roman* Historians give the same Account of the Rise of the Order among that People, who multiplied their Priests in proportion to the Growth of their Gods and Ceremonies. And this was also the Case of the *Jews*, as appeareth from Scripture.

C H A P. II.

Of the JEWISH PRIESTHOOD.

THOUGH the *Jewish* Law was not given till the Days of *Moses*, their Religion was as old as *Abraham*. Virtue and Probity, and the Worship of one God, was the antient Religion, as old as *Adam* and *Noah*; and when it began to be corrupted among the *Chaldeans*, God called *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, and instructed him in his true Worship; and gave him moreover the Badge of Circumcision, which has continued ever since as a Characteristick of a *Jew*. All that *Moses* gave, was no Institution of any new Religion as to the Substance, but a more explicit Declaration of moral Duties, and a vast Addition of Rites and Ceremonies.

Since there was no new Ceremony added to the well known antient Rites of Sacrifice and Worship, in the Days of *Abraham*, except the single Rite of Circumcision, there appeared no Necessity to establish an Order of Men to preserve the Knowledge and Practice of one single Ceremony, which could be remembered and observed by every particular Person: Wherefore, as was already observed, every Man seemeth to have been a Priest for himself or Household, until the Giving of the Law at *Sinai*.

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The only Objection against this Position, is a prevailing Opinion, that the First-born were Priests before the Giving of the Law, which is endeavoured to be confirmed from *Numbers* iii. 2, where God took the *Levites* in lieu of the First-born, as *Moses* declareth: *Behold I have taken the Levites from among the Children of Israel, instead of all the First-born that openeth the Matrice among the Children of Israel, therefore the Levites shall be mine.*

But, if such as make this Objection had considered the next Verse, they would have seen a quite different Reason for God's Property in the First-born, not because they were Priests, but, *Because all the First-born are mine; for in the Day that I smote all the First-born in Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the First-born of Israel, both of Men and Beasts, mine they shall be both Man and Beast.*

If the First-born had been then set apart to the Priests Office, what had the First-born of Beasts to do there? Besides, this Sanctification of the First-born happened but three Months before the Giving of the Law; who then were Priests from the Days of *Abraham* to the Destruction of the First-born of *Egypt*? And why should God make the First-born Priests, when he designed in three Months time to abolish them, in order to establish the Sons of *Aaron*?

Nor doth it appear that any of the First-born ever officiated. Before *Aaron* was appointed, *Moses* performed the Part of a Priest; and young Men of *Israel*, who have no Mark of Distinction from other Men, performed the Part of inferior Priests and Levites: For in *Exod.* xxv. 5, they slew the Sacrifices, and *Moses* made an Atonement with the Blood, and yet *Aaron*, the elder Brother of *Moses*, was present at that Ceremony, and had no Part in the Ministration.

Beside, the First-born were exchanged for the Levites, and not for the Priests, for the Priesthood was confined to the Sons of *Aaron*. And after all, that

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Exchange did not excuse the First-born of future Ages; for the First-born, both of Man and Beasts, were to be the Lord's through all Generations, until they were redeemed by a Set Price, if it were not a Creature fit to be sacrificed, *Exod. xiii. 2.*

The Truth is, that God, in order to plague the obstinate *Egyptians*, devoted the First-born of Man and Beast to Destruction, through all *Egypt*: but in the Execution, he had Compassion on the *Israelites* who dwelt in that Country, yet took them to himself as his own Property, in the same manner as he took such Things as any *Israelite* should devote to him. Now the Law of devoted Things was, that it should be slain, if a living Creature, or given to the Priests as God's Portion, if a Thing without Life, *Lev. xxvii. 28.* God did not insist rigorously on his Right in the Case of these First-born, but admitted a Redemption for such Things as were unfit for Sacrifice; the Levites redeemed Man for Man as far as their Number reached, the rest were redeemed at five Shekels a Head, *Numb. iii. 47. and xviii. 16.* which Law of Redemption extended to all future Ages. Such unclean Beasts as the Owner would not redeem, were to have their Necks broke, and the clean Beasts to be sacrificed, *Exod. xiii. 12.* And the Reason why this Ordinance is made perpetual, is, that when their Children should enquire what that Custom meant, they might instruct them in the great Deliverance from *Egypt*.

Though there was no Order of Priests before the Law, yet when *Moses*, by divine Command, appointed a particular Place, and Set-times of Worship, instituted many and different kinds of Sacrifices and religious Rites, distinguished most Things into clean and unclean, and set many Utensils and other Things apart for God's Service, God thought fit to appoint an Order of Men to manage all these Parts of Worship, to take Care, that all the due Ceremonies and Rites should be observed; and to expiate the Sins of the

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People, and purify them from Uncleaness, according to the Prescript of the Law. This was the first Beginning of the Priesthood among the *Jews*, which, by divine Appointment, was settled on *Aaron*, and his Posterity.

The Nature of their Office is in general described by *Moses*, that they were to *minister before the Lord*. *St. Paul* calls them *Ministers of holy Things, who wait at the Altar*. These Expressions comprehend their chief Design, and principal Part of their Office, which was, to represent the People before God, and minister to him in their Name, and on their Behalf; to reconcile God to them by offering Sacrifices, Oblations, Prayers, and Thanksgivings. And since their Ministration is confined to holy Things, our first Enquiry must be, what are these holy Things?

Holiness, in the Language of the Old Testament, signifieth a Separation from a common and ordinary Use, to one more excellent, that is, from the Service of Man, to the Service of God. This relative Holiness is applicable to Things, and Persons; to *Things*, as the Tabernacle, Temple, Houses, Times, and Places; to the Vessels, Utensils, Vestments of the Priests, all Things designed for Sacrifice and Oblations, or any Creature, Field, or Money, when devoted, dedicated, or set apart to God's Service, or employed in his Worship; all such Things are said to be *holy*, from their Relation to God.

Holiness of Persons is also taken in the same Sense, for any Person who hath any peculiar Relation to God. Such were the Priests, Levites, and Nazarites, and all the First-born, until redeemed. In this Sense the whole Nation of the *Israelites* are called holy, as they were brought into a Covenant-Relation to God. This kind of Holiness is only relative and external; but there is another kind of Holiness of Persons, which is real and internal, inherent in the Person, and is a Separation from moral Imperfection, from Sin and Impurity,

purity, and this in Perfection is peculiar to God; he is the only Holy One; but in an imperfect Degree it belongeth to all good and religious Men. The relative Holiness is expressed by the Greek Word ἱερός, *sacer*, and the real Holiness by ὁσιότης, *sanctitas*, *pietas*, *justitia*.

This relative Holiness seems the proper Meaning of Holiness among the *Jews*, when applied to Things and Persons, and is opposed to common and profane, both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*; but real Holiness, in the Old Testament, appeareth to be a peculiar Attribute of God, from which all other Things that have any Relation to him, are relatively said to be holy. Whereas, under the New Testament, that inward and real Holiness, though imperfect, is applied to Persons, and made the principal Quality of a Christian.

When any Thing, or Person, was set apart to God's Service, some Ceremonies were appointed to be performed, in order to remove them from a common to a sacred Use; and that Action by which they were thus set apart, is called *Sanctification*; and the Person or Thing thus sanctified, was thenceforth reputed and called *holy*. And as there were many Accidents which might defile the Person thus sanctified, and render him unclean; before he could again be proper for his Service, he must again be cleansed, sanctified, or purified. Not that the first Character of Holiness was lost by such Uncleaness, but, as it were, suspended until it could be restored. As in *Levit. xx. 25.* *Thou shalt not make yourselves abominable by Beast or by Fowl, or by any manner of living thing, which I have separated from you as unclean, and ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from other People that ye should be mine.*

Now the Office of the Priests among the *Jews* consisted altogether in that outward Religion which regarded these holy Things, and in performing all the holy Rites and Ceremonies, which is the Reason

that Character given of them by St. Paul, of being *Ministers of holy things*.

The Laws of *Moses* are commonly distinguished into three Sorts. The *ceremonial*, *moral*, and *judicial*. The ceremonial Law regulated all their holy Things, and Actions ; the moral, enjoined the eternal Rules of Virtue and Honesty ; and the judicial, directed what sentence to pass in all Civil Debates about Property, and regulated the Punishment of Offenders in Civil matters.

The ceremonial Law belonged to Religion, and was under the Care and Direction of the Priests. The judicial Law belonged to the Magistrates, and directed their Manner of Proceeding. And the moral Law was partly the Business of the Magistrate, but chiefly of the Prophets, as we shall see hereafter.

The Office of the Priest then was exercised only about outward Religion, their Rites and Ceremonies, called holy Things ; which were all positive Ordinances, which had no Goodness in their own Nature, but derived all their Worth from the Will of the Lawgiver, and symbolical Use, as being Signs and Representations of inward Purity ; whence we may call their Religion, so far as the Priests were concerned in it, symbolical, external, or representative of better Things. Their Office therefore may be thus described, *An Order of Men appointed by God to take Care of the holy things, to appear before him in their own Name, and in the Name of the People, to perform the Duties of instituted Worship, to make Atonement for the People's sins, and reconcile them to God by Sacrifices, to cleanse them from external Pollutions, and to pray to God to bless them.*

All which may be reduced to these three Heads : 1. To offer Oblations to God. 2. To cleanse the People. And, 3. To pray for a Blessing on the People. No private Person could offer an Oblation to God, he must bring it to the Priest, solemnly re-

nounce his private Right, and assign it to God's Service; and then the Priest must offer it on the Altar, according to the Ceremonies prescribed by the Law, which very minutely directs all the Ceremonies of choosing clean and sound Beasts, how they were to be slain, how burnt, how the Blood should be disposed of, and what and by whom it should be eaten, in order to make an Atonement, and render the Sacrifice acceptable. No *Israelite* could appear before the Lord empty; but the Priest alone must offer the Oblation, whether of Beasts, Fowl, Fruits, Cakes, Oil, or Honey.

As Sacrifices and Oblations were among them the principal Parts of divine Worship, they also became the principal Part of the Priest's Office; they only were allowed to sprinkle the Blood, whereby Atonement and Expiation was made, whence Priest and Sacrifice became relative Terms; the Sacrifice made the Priest, and he alone offered it, which is the Meaning of St. *Paul's* Description of a Priest, that he is one *who waits at the Altar*. If any Person who was not of the priestly Race should attempt to invade this Part of his Office, his Presumption was made capital, and by Law, he must expiate his Crime with his Life.

Though the Rules about Sacrifices are very particularly described in the Law, yet the Nature and End of them, for what Reasons they were appointed, and what Effect they had for the Benefit of the Offerer, are very imperfectly and deficiently expressed, and must be gathered from Hints and Circumstances, rather than from any direct Rule or Law; whence it comes, that learned Men, and even the *Jewish* Rabbies, are divided in their Opinions about them. The Reason of which seemeth to be, that they were of constant Use, and very well known by all the People long before the Law, and are therefore supposed not necessary to be expressed.

These Sacrifices and Oblations may be reduced to four Sorts. 1. Whole Burnt-Offerings. 2. Sin-Offerings. 3. Trespass-Offerings. 4. Peace-Offerings.

1. Whole Burnt-Offerings. It is disputed among the learned of the *Jews*, what was the Occasion of these *Holocausts*, and to what End they were offered. Some suppose them to have been simple Acknowledgments of God, the Creator of the Universe, and Evidences that they owned him to be their Lord, continued in Covenant with him, and implored his Blessing. Others conclude, that either they were to expiate evil Thoughts of the Heart, as Sin Offerings and Trespass-Offerings did evil Actions, or else to atone for the Breach of affirmative Precepts, as those did for negative. Some join both these Causes, as *Rivet* in *Psal.* *Tota enim hostia propitiandi et honorandi Dei gratia, igne sacro in Altari, consumebatur.*

Moses, in delivering the Law, is silent as to that Matter; but by observing the Practice recorded in Scripture, it appears, the whole Burnt-Offerings were of the most general Nature of all their Acts of Devotion, and were offered both in Honour of God, as an Acknowledgment of the Homage due to him by his Creatures, as Thanksgivings for Blessings received, as Requests to receive more, and also as Expiations and Atonements for Sin. All these seem justly to be inferred from the daily Sacrifice offered Morning and Evening in the Temple. These were whole Burnt-Offerings, and the only constant Service of the *Jewish* Church. All other Sacrifices were either at stated Times, or occasional; but this being their constant Worship, must be supposed to answer all the Ends of such Worship, which undoubtedly comprehends all that is above expressed.

In the noted Case of *Hezekiah*, when Kings, Priests, and People, and the Temple also, were polluted and profaned; we find they offered Sin-Offerings and Burnt-Offerings for all *Israel*; and after they had made

made an Atonement, and sanctified themselves by these Sacrifices, by the King's Order, they brought their Sacrifices and Thank-Offerings, among which great Number were whole Burnt-Offerings, seven Bullocks, one hundred Rams, and two hundred Lambs from which Transaction it seemeth pretty evident, that whole Burnt-Offerings were made use of, both as Expiations and Thanksgivings.

When God's Anger was kindled against *Israel*, and the Plague broke forth, on occasion of *David's* numbering the People, in order to expiate the Crime, and divert the divine Wrath, *David* offered Burnt-Offerings at the threshing Floor of *Araunah*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25. *David built there an Altar unto the Lord, and offered Burnt-Offerings, and Peace-Offerings, so that the Lord was intreated for the Land, and the Plague was stayed from Israel.* And in *Levit. i. 5.* the Burnt Offering is expressly said to make an Atonement for the Man for whom it was offered.

These Burnt-Offerings were either solemn and stated for all *Israel*, or voluntary and free-will Offerings for particular Persons.

2. *Sin Offerings.* 3. *Trespass Offerings.* The Difficulties and Disputes are greater with respect to these. Learned Men allow a Difference, but are extremely puzzled to find wherein it lies. *Vatablus* imagines that Sin Offerings are for greater Sins, and *Trespass Offerings* for less. *St. Austin, Lyra, Abulensis*, and others, by *Sin*, understand Sins of Commission; and by *Trespass*, Sins of Omission. Others place *Sin* in the Act, and *Trespass* in the Thought. *Eugubinus* and others, make that to be the Sin which is against Knowledge; and *Trespass*, through Ignorance or Imprudence. *Sigonius*, who is followed by most Interpreters, says the quite contrary, which is also the Opinion of *Philo Judeus*, who ought to know the Case, and he maketh *Sin* a Sin of Ignorance, and *Trespass*

pass a Sin against Knowledge. Others imagine, that Sin and Trespas are only two Words for the same Thing. Others again, observing that both these Offerings were made for Sins of Ignorance, suppose the Sin Offering for an Ignorance of the Fact, and the Trespas-Offering for an Ignorance of the Law ; as if a Man eat consecrated Bread not knowing it to be such, is Ignorance of the Fact ; or not knowing it was forbidden, is Ignorance of the Law.

I shall not spend Time in examining these several Opinions, but declare what I take to be the Truth of the Case, and my Reasons for it.

1. No doubt but the Words *Hattaa* and *Asbam*, which we translate Sin and Trespas, do both signify Sin in a proper Sense, and are often used promiscuously ; yet when they are distinguished, according to these two Sorts of Offerings, they are certainly restrained to some particular Sense, and denote different kinds of Sin.

2. The Sins for which Sin-Offerings were made, were all Sins of Ignorance : the Cases mentioned in *Levit. iv.* where the Law gives Directions about them, are all of that Nature, either where the particular Sin was afterwards discovered, or in general, when they knew some Sin had been committed, but were in doubt what the particular Sin was ; or when there was a doubt whether any Sin had been committed, but had Reason to suspect the worst. In all these Cases Sin-Offerings were appointed.

The general Law about them in *Levit. iv. 2.* runs thus, *If a Soul shall sin through Ignorance, against any of the Commandments of the Lord (concerning Things which ought not to be done) and shall do against any of them, &c.* All the particular Cases there mentioned, are Branches of this general Law, that is, about Sins of Ignorance, whether in the Priest, Ruler, the whole People, or any particular Person. And according to these Distinctions, there are particular Sin-Offerings appointed.

3. The Sin-Offering was not allowed for every Sin of Ignorance, but for such only as transgressed the Law of outward Religion, that is, the ceremonial Law. For I do not find any Expiation allowed or mentioned for Transgressions of the moral or judicial Law, unless such Transgression included also a Breach of the ceremonial Law; and in that Case, it was the Breach of the Ceremony that was expiated, and not the moral or civil Transgression. Wherever any particular Case is named, it is always of that Sort. And this seemeth to be meant by that Expression in the Law, *against any of the Commandments concerning things which ought not to be done*, that is, of instituted Worship. And the particular Cases refer entirely to legal and not to moral Crimes, such as Purifications, and cleansing of Women and Lepers, the Defilement of a Nazarite, &c. Among these Sins against instituted Religion, is reckoned Idolatry, when it was by a general Error or Mistake in the kind or manner of Sacrifice.

4. The Trespass-Offering was made for Sins of Ignorance of the same Nature, and also for some Sins against Knowledge, which a Person voluntarily owned before Conviction; for if a Man did not own his Sin until he was convicted, it was supposed to be done with an high Hand, and such a Person was to be cut off. No Sacrifice was allowed to restore him. These Sins against Knowledge are mentioned *Levit. v. and vi.* and all of them have Reference to voluntary Perjury; and since an Oath was a solemn Act of religious Worship, Perjury was looked upon as a Sin against Religion, which might be atoned by Sacrifice, if the Man out of Conscience owned his Fault before he was convicted.

But that which distinguished a Trespass from a Sin, seemeth to be this, that such Sins as, beside the Transgression of the religious Law, did also some Injury to the Property or Possessions of God, or Man, were called

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called Trespasses ; but where no Property was invaded by the Crime, it was simply called a Sin. The first required a Trespass-Offering, the second a Sin-Offering.

Thus all the Cases of Perjury mentioned, are such as injured their Neighbour ; and together with the Sacrifice, they were obliged to restore what was defrauded, and a fifth Part more : But if the guilty Person had been convicted, no Sacrifice was allowed, and he was condemned to restore double. And when a Trespass-Offering was ordered to be made for Crimes that did not regard their Neighbour, but related immediately to God, they are supposed to include some Fraud done to God in his Possessions, or holy Things set apart to his Service, and a Compensation is ordered to be made, according as the Priest should value the Thing refused or embezzled. As in *Levit. v. 15.* *If a Soul commit a Trespass, and sin through Ignorance, in the holy Things of the Lord, then he shall bring for his Trespass unto the Lord a Ram without Blemish, out of the Flocks, with thy Estimation by Shekels of Silver, after the Shekel of the Sanctuary, for a Trespass-Offering, and he shall make Amends for the Harm that he hath done in the holy Thing, and shall add a fifth Part thereto, and give it unto the Priest.*

The same must be understood of the Trespass-Offering, to be made by a Man that lay with a betrothed Maid Slave, *Levit. xix. 20, 21.* in which Case an Injury was done to the Property of another. No other Instances are given of Trespass-Offerings, but that of a *Nazarite* who had broken his Vow, *Numb. vi. 12.* and the Purification of a Leper, *Levit. xiv. 12.* The Breach of a *Nazarite's* Vow was an Injury done to God's Property, for the *Nazarite* was his. And the cleansing of a Leper was attended with a Burnt-Offering, a Sin-Offering, and a Trespass-Offering, because Leprosy was a Plague sent as a Punishment for some Sin ; and since the Sin which caused it was

unknown, these several Sorts of Sacrifices were appointed, that in case the Sin was expiable, they might be sure to use the proper Means, by using them all.

5. The *Peace Offerings* were of three Sorts, *Thank Offerings*, *Freewill Offerings*, and *Offerings for Vows*, which shew their Nature and End sufficiently by their Names; and as there is no Dispute about them, they need no farther Explication.

From this Account of Sacrifices, it appears, that they did not free Men from the moral Turpitude of Sin, nor from any Guilt incurred by the Breach of the moral Law, but from the Guilt of such Sins only as were a Transgression of the instituted Worship of the *Jews*. Not from all these, but such only as were committed through Ignorance, and in some Cases through Infirmary; yet they effectually removed all their legal Impurities, and external Defilements.

Hence the Author to the *Hebrews*, who perfectly understood the Nature of the *Jewish* Religion, argues, *That the Blood of Bulls and Goats, and the Ashes of a Heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh*, Heb. ix. 13. that is, they make the Person relatively holy, but not really so; they remove the legal, but have no Efficacy to cleanse the moral Stain of Sin; which he attributes to another Cause, to the Blood of *Christ*.

All Sins under the Law of *Moses* may be considered in two different Views: 1. As doing Injustice to our Neighbour. 2. As a Disobedience to God. As they do Injustice to our Neighbour, they fall under the Cognizance of the Civil Magistrate. And the Priest had no Concern in such Sinners, unless the Crime comprehended some Transgression of a positive Ordinance of Religion; and in such Cases a Trespass Offering was allowed to expiate the legal Offence, and a Restitution should satisfy the Neighbour.

As any Sin was a Disobedience to God, it admitted also a twofold Consideration, in respect of God's moral

al Law made known by Nature, and his positive Law known only by Revelation. Transgressions against the moral Law admitted of no Expiation, nor do we read of any Sacrifice appointed to atone for Sins of that kind; but Disobedience to the positive revealed Laws of Religion might be expiated, when the Sin was committed ignorantly. Yet this must be farther considered.

For in every Disobedience to the Law of God, the Sin, among the *Jews*, had a double Consideration. Such a Sin contracted a moral Guilt, arising from the Turpitude of the Action, which exposed the Offender to God's Wrath; and it also contracted a legal Pollution, which suspended the Relation the Offender had to God, and unqualified him to make any Offering or Oblation, or join in any public Act of Worship, till the legal Impurity was removed.

Now the Sacrifices, Oblations, and other religious expiations and Cleansings, intirely removed this legal impurity and Incapacity, and qualified the Offender for all the Rights of an *Israelite*, and made him fit to perform and join in any public Act of instituted Worship, which was enjoined to the People of *Israel*, but did not remove the moral Guilt or Stain of Sin, otherwise than symbolically, as it was a Symbol or sign of Repentance and inward Purity, and a Type of the Expiation to be made by the Blood of the *Messias* to come. Until which Time, the moral Guilt and Stain of Sin were reserved in God's own Power, under his immediate Cognizance, and which he punished or forgave, according to his Pleasure, and the sincerity of the Man's Repentance.

The Sum of the Whole is this: The Offence against the Neighbour, and the Breach of the moral Law, were subject to the Cognizance of the Magistrate. The moral and inherent Turpitude, and the Guilt of Sin, were under God's immediate Cognizance. But the legal Impurity, Incapacity, Uncleanness, or external

ternal Defilement of Sin, arising from the Breach of a positive Law of instituted Religion, and that when committed through Ignorance or Infirmary, belonged to the Office and Cognizance of the Priest, who alone offered the Sacrifice, and atoned for the Guilty.

The Silence of *Moses*, and the various Opinions of learned Men, about the Nature and Efficacy of the several Sorts of Sacrifices, is a strong Presumption, that all these kinds of Sacrifices were of Use before the Law, and very well known to the People by constant Practices from the most early Patriarchs; and that *Moses*, supposing their Knowledge of these Things, prescribed nothing new about them, only made many Additions to their Number and Ceremonies, in order to separate and distinguish that Nation from the Manners and Customs of the rest of the World. Otherwise he would not have failed to explain the Thing as distinctly as the Manner, and we should have been at no Loss to find out the Reason and Design of these Sacrifices, and what Effect they produced.

The next principal Part of outward Religion among the *Jews*, consisted in preserving the People from external Pollutions, and cleansing them when they happened to be defiled. As that People were separated from the rest of the World, and brought into a Covenant Relation with God, so the many Rules about external Defilements and Cleansings were purely designed to keep them unmixt, in that State of Separation, as God himself testifies by *Moses*, *Levit. xx. 25* who gives this Reason why they should not defile themselves by these external Things, *because I have separated you from other People, that you should be mine.*

All manner of Beasts were divided into clean and unclean; the Carcase of a dead Beast, the Corpse of a Man, many Distempers, and several other Things by Contact, rendered People unclean. And when

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Person was unclean, by any of the Reasons declared in the Law, there were different Forms of Purification, by washing, sprinkling with the Ashes of a red Heifer, some by the Intervention of the Priest, and some by themselves, but after all these Ceremonies, they were not perfectly clean, and restored to their Privileges, until, by the Ministration of the Priest, they had offered the proper Sacrifice appointed by the Law.

Another essential Part of Religion, and the Priest's Office, was the offering up of their Prayers. In the Temple Service there was no stated Form, but every Man prayed separately by himself. This is agreed on among the Rabbies, and appeareth from *Hannab's* praying by herself; and because she in her Earnestness continued longer, or perhaps used some uncommon Gestures, *Eli* mistook her for a drunken Woman; and also from the Representation made by our Saviour of the Pharisee and Publican's Prayer in the Gospel.

Yet the Prayers made in particular were not thought effectual, until they were presented to God by the Priest; which he did, not by joining with them, or saying them before them, as was the manner of the Rulers of the Synagogue, and is the Practice of the Ministers in Christian Churches, but by offering Incense at the Altar of Incense in the Sanctuary; which was twice every Day at the Offering of the daily Sacrifice, whence that Time is called the Hour of Prayer.

For while the Lamb was a slaying, the Altar of Incense was cleansed; and while the Blood was a sprinkling, some of the Lamps were dressed; when this was done, and the Pieces of the Sacrifice were carried to the Altar, salted and left there, the President called to all in the Courts to go to Prayers. While they prayed separately, the Priest went into the Sanctuary to burn the Incense; then the President

without called to him within, *Sir, offer the Incense;* on the Giving of which Signal, the Incense was set on Fire, and all the Company in the Court withdrew downward from the Temple, to finish the rest of their Prayers, while the Incense was burning. When the Prayers were finished, the Priest laid the Pieces of the Sacrifice on the Altar. After which the Priest solemnly prayed for a Blessing on the People, while he stood on the Steps going up to the Porch. That Form of Prayer is called the Blessing, and is peculiar to the Priest's Office. The Form is prescribed, *Numb. vi. 22, 23. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his Face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his Countenance upon thee, and give thee Peace.* After which it is added, *And they shall put my Name upon the Children of Israel, and I will bless them.* In which Words, the Priests are commanded to call upon the Name of the Lord, and intreat him to bless the People; and upon their Prayer God himself promiseth to bless them; and this is called the Priests blessing the People. And this Custom was observed in our Saviour's Days. For *St. Luke* informeth us, *Luke i. 10. The whole Multitude were praying without at the Time of Incense.* And that the Offering of Incense was really an offering and presenting of the People's Prayers to God, *St. John* more than intimateth, *Rev. viii. 3, 4.* when he explains the offering of Incense by the Angels, to be the Prayers of the Saints. Whence also the *Psalmist*, *cxli. 2.* compares them, *Let my Prayers be set forth before thee as Incense.*

These three were the principal and essential Parts of the Priest's Office. 1. To make an Atonement for the People's Sins by Sacrifice. 2. To cleanse them from their legal Defilements. And, 3. To commend their Prayers to God by Incense, and dismiss them with the Prayer of Blessing.

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The other Parts of their Office are no more than Appendages, and necessary Concomitants and Consequences of these: For Instance, they had the Charge of the Temple, where these holy Rites must be performed; of all the Vessels and Utensils, which were to be used in the Ministration; of the holy Garments for themselves to wear; of the Book of the Law, which was their only Director how they should discharge their Office: They therefore cleaned the Altars, dressed the Lamps, kindled the Incense, sounded the Trumpets at the solemn Feasts, kept the Fire alive on the great Altar, prepared the holy Ointment with the Spices, set the Shew Bread on the Table, and did all other Things relating to the Worship of God in the Temple.

But it is questioned whether by their Office they were obliged to teach the Law, and what Part of it, and in what manner they were to teach it.

Several Places of Scripture put it beyond Controversy, that the Priests were required to teach the Law. As in *Deut. xxxi. 9.* *And Moses wrote the Law, and delivered it unto the Priests the Sons of Levi,—and commanded them, saying,—Thou shalt read this Law before all Israel in their Hearing.* And *Levit. x. 9, 10.* the Priests are forbidden to drink Wine, *That they may teach the Children of Israel all the Statutes, &c.* The Prophet *Malachi* also, *ch. ii. 7.* observes, that the Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth. The Prophet *Hosea* also, *iv. 6.* complains, that God's People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge, and blames the Priests for this Ignorance of the People, as themselves are blamed for teaching for Hire, by *Micah, iii. 2.* In the *2 Chron. xxv. 3.* *Israel* is said to have been long without a teaching Priest.

Although these Places prove their Obligation to teach the Law, yet they do not so precisely inform us, what Law it was which belonged to their Office to teach,

teach, but that still there is room left for a farther Enquiry. And we shall find it was not the whole Law of *Moses*, but the ceremonial Law only, the Laws about external Religion, or religious Worship. For as the essential Part of their Office was confined to positive and instituted Worship, it is natural to believe, that their teaching was of no greater Extent. They do not seem to have had any more Concern about the moral and judicial Law, by virtue of their Office, than any of their Nation. This seems a necessary Consequence of their Office, and therefore the Precepts about it are scarce any.

The only Place that looks like a Precept is that before quoted Place of *Deut.* xxxi. 9. where the Priests are commanded to read the Law to all the People; but by reading the whole Passage, it is easy to observe, that the Charge of keeping the Law is given to the Priests, in Conjunction with the Elders, of the Children of *Israel*, that is, the whole Sanhedrim. And the Charge of reading the Law once in seven Years, publicly, to all the People, is also given to the same Sanhedrim, in Conjunction with the Priests. And thus also it was practised in the three noted Instances upon Record. When the People were settled in the promised Land, *Joshua* the chief Magistrate assembled the People, and read the Law, pursuant to this Command, *Josh.* viii. 34. In the Days of *Josiah*, when the Law was almost forgotten, and *Hilkiab* the Priest found the Book in the Sanctuary, *Josiah* the King, in Person, assembled the People, and read the whole Law to them, *2 Kings* xxiii. 2. *Ezra*, who read the Law after the Captivity, was indeed a Priest, but he was also the chief Magistrate; and according to the foregoing Instances, it is more likely that he read the Law in his Civil than Ecclesiastical Capacity.

The Truth seemeth to be this: There were so many Blemishes which rendered clean Beasts unfit for Sacrifice, far more numerous and difficult Cases about clean

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clean and unclean Things and Persons, so many Pollutions and Cleansings, that every Man could not be at leisure to distinguish them, it became an intricate and tedious Study. Now the Priests are enjoined by the Law to solve all these Difficulties, and the People are bound to be determined by their Judgment. In this Sense only the Priests by their Office were Teachers of the Law.

To this Purpose, let us examine the Texts of Scripture before quoted, *Levit. x. 9, 10. Do not drink Wine, nor strong Drink, thou nor thy Sons, when ye go into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, lest ye die. It shall be a Statute for ever throughout your Generations, and that ye may put a Difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean. And that ye may teach the Children of Israel all the Statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto you by the Hand of Moses.*

Nadab and Abihu, two Priests of the Sons of Aaron, had carelessly taken common Fire, and not the holy Fire of the Altar, and with this strange Fire had burnt Incense before the Lord. For this Offence in their Office, Fire came out from the Lord, and devoured them both. It seems these young Men's Heads were hot with strong Liquor, which made them guilty of so gross a Mistake in the divine Service. To prevent the Danger of a Fault of the like Nature, as soon as *Moses* had related the Crime and Punishment of these Priests, he declares this Law; the Design of which is to keep the Priests sober in the Administration, both for their own Sakes, and the People's. For their own Sakes, lest they should mistake in any of the Ceremonies of their Ministration. And for the People's, lest they should lead them into a Mistake of the like Nature. Therefore the Instances given are of Things holy and unholy, clean and unclean, wherein the People were to be directed by the Priests. And the Precept says expressly, they should teach the People the *Statutes* of the Lord; which

which Word, *Statutes*, is generally understood to signify that Part of the Law which directed their holy Rites and positive Worship, and hath a natural Reference to the holy and unholy in the Words before them.

When the Scripture giveth Instances of any particular Case, wherein the Priests were to teach the People, the Instance is never in any Part of the moral or judicial Law, but always of the ceremonial; which may serve to explain such Places of the Prophets, where the teaching of the Law is said to be their Charge. Thus *Levit. xiv. 16*, and *57. Take heed, saith Moses, to the Plague of Leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all the Priest and Levite shall teach you, Deut. xxiv. 8.*

The Prophet *Haggai* explaineth fully what Law the Priests were obliged to teach, *Hag. ii. 11. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Ask now the Priests concerning the Law, saying, If one bear holy Flesh in his Garment, and with his Skirt do touch Bread, or Pottage, or Wine, or Oil, or any Meat, shall it be holy? And the Priests answered, and said, No. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead Body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the Priests answered, and said, It shall be unclean.*

In this Sense also the Prophet *Malachi* declares, that *the Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth, Mal. ii. 7.* The Prophet *Jeremiah* distinguisheth expressly the Office of the Priest, Magistrate, and Prophet, *Jer. xviii. 18. The Law shall not perish from the Priest, nor Counsel from the Wise, nor the Word from the Prophet.* For the ceremonial Law was the Priest's Charge; the judicial, that of the Wise or Magistrates; and Morality, and divine Judgments, called the Word, that of the Prophets, as we shall see in the Sequel.

When the Prophet *Hosea* complains, that God's People were destroyed for lack of Knowledge, and threatens

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threatens the Priest for forgetting the Law of God, and rejecting Knowledge, *Hof. iv. 6.* he explaineth his Meaning sufficiently, in the 13th Verse of that Chapter, by instancing, in the ceremonial Law, the People sacrificed on the Tops of the Mountains, and burnt Incense on the Hills, under Oaks, and Poplars, and Elms. Their Transgression was against instituted Worship, and they were led into it by the Ignorance and Negligence of the Priests, whose peculiar Charge that was; but whenever the People are rebuked for Immoralities, the Blame is cast on themselves, or on the Magistrates, and not on the Priests, whose Office lay another Way.

In 2 *Chron. xv. 3.* a Complaint is made, that *Israel* was without a *teaching Priest*. This Complaint is made by *Azariah* the Son of *Oded*, and is given as one Reason of the Crimes which brought Judgments on the Land. Since the Prophet doth not tell us the Sins they had fallen into for Want of a teaching Priest, but contents himself with giving that as a Cause of the Judgments; we shall best know what their Sins were, by the Reformation King *Asa* made, upon the Prophet's Speech to him and the People. And we have that Account in the 8th Verse. *When Asa heard the Words of the Prophecy of Oded the Prophet, he took Courage, and put away the abominable Idols, out of the Land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the Cities which he had taken from Mount Ephraim, and renewed the Altar of the Lord,—and offered unto the Lord—100 Oxen, 7000 Sheep, &c.*

It seems then by this Reformation, that the Sins they were guilty of for want of a teaching Priest, were the Neglect of God's immediate Service, and Profanation of his Temple and Altar by Idolatry; which was the most essential Part of the Priest's Office to guard against: For the whole Worship was under their Care.

All these Instances make it plain, that the Priest's Office was confined, both in Practice, Power, Instruction, and Teaching, to instituted Worship, to the immediate Service of God, and their holy Things. And this is also the Opinion of their modern Rabbies, for as Mr. *Lewis*, in his *Antiquities*, quotes them, page $\frac{48}{362}$, "The Elders judged the People in Matters of Debate and Controversy, but never instructed them by preaching; the Priests judged and instructed, but it was more by resolving Questions, than by common Preaching, or Sermons; the Scribes were Preachers, or Lecturers, that taught the People from the Pulpit, as well as determined upon Doubts and Controversies."

We shall have Occasion hereafter to enquire into the Office of the Scribes. I only observe here, that the Instruction which is made Part of the Priest's Office, consisted in resolving of Questions, that is, in answering Cases of Conscience relating to their holy Things, and Uncleanesses, like those Cases in the forequoted Place of *Haggai*, about clean Beasts, Blemishes, legal Pollutions, and Cleansings. Such Parts of their instituted Worship were intricate and perplexed, and required a particular Study and Practice. The People also by the Law were bound to be determined by the Judgment of the Priests, whose Judgment in these Cases was final; as also in the Case of Leprosy and Jealousy; the Reason of which last is, because the cleansing of the Leper, and Trial of Jealousy, were done by holy and religious Ceremonies; and therefore, by the Nature of the Thing, the Cognizance of these Causes fell to the Priest, who was the sole Minister of Religion.

There is indeed one Text which seems to constitute the Priest, in Conjunction with the Magistrate, a Judge in Civil Affairs, and that by virtue of, or as a Part of his Office, *Deut. xviii. 8. If there arise a Matter too hard for thee in Judgment, between Blood*

and Blood, between Plea and Plea, and between Stroke and Stroke, being Matters of Controversy within thy Gates, then shalt thou arise and get thee up unto the Place which the Lord thy God shalt choose; and thou shalt come unto the Priests and Levites, and unto the Judge that shall be in those Days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the Sentence of Judgment, and thou shalt do according to the Sentence which they of that Place (which the Lord shall choose) shall shew thee,—and the Man that will do presumptuously, and will notarken unto the Priest (that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God) or unto the Judge, even that Man shall die.

The best Exposition of a doubtful Law, is taken from the Practice of the Courts pursuant to that Law. And in this Case we have the Practice of *Jehosaphat*, 2 *Chron.* xix. which is a genuine Comment on this Text, and fully explaineth it. By this Text appears, there were inferior Courts in *Israel*; for *Judges* in the Old Testament signify Courts of Justice: and the Law, in this Text, erects a supreme Court at the Place where the Tabernacle or Temple should be, which should receive Appeals from the inferior Courts, and determine finally. This supreme Court consisteth of Priests and Judges, who are, by the Text, to determine civil and criminal Causes.

In 2 *Chron.* xix. we find King *Jehosaphat* erecting Courts in the Country, § 5. And he set Judges in the Land throughout all the fenced Cities of Judah; § 8, he erected the supreme Tribunal for Appeals at *Jerusalem*, being the Place which the Lord chose. In *Jerusalem* did *Jehosaphat* set of the Levites, and of the Priests, and of the chief of the Fathers of *Israel*, for the Judgment of the Lord, and for Controversies, when they returned to *Jerusalem*. And he charged them—What Cause soever shall come to you of your Brethren that dwell in their Cities, between Blood and Blood, between Law and Commandment, Statutes

Statutes and Judgments, &c. Here he erecteth his Court of Appeals: The Question is, Whether the Priests and Judges acted jointly in all Causes, or the Priests were confined to religious Causes, and the Judges to civil and criminal. And the next Verse seemeth plainly to divide them; for *ŷ 11, Jehoshaphat addeth, And behold Amariah the chief Priest is over you in all Matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the Son of Ishmael, the Ruler of the House of Judah, for all the King's Matters; also the Levites shall be Officers before you.*

Here the High Priest presideth in religious Debates; and the Ruler in civil Actions; so that the Priest's principal Business even in these Courts were the Affairs of Religion, and the Magistrate was over civil and criminal Matters.

And yet by the *Jewish* Constitution the Priests might be Judges in civil Causes, and often were, but not by virtue of their priestly Office, but as they were great Men, of a liberal Education, and qualified for Posts of that Nature. The Priest's Office was peculiarly adapted to Religion; but as Men and Subjects, they were not excluded or restrained from any Employment Civil or Military, they might be Ministers of State, Judges, Officers, and Soldiers. For where Men are not restrained by some superior Law the chief Magistrate hath a Right to employ any Subject in any Post for the Good of the State, if he find him qualified for it. And the *Jews* practised accordingly. The Sacredness of the Office did not make the Priest useless in any Necessity of State. No divine Law laid any Incapacity upon them for such Employments, they still retained their natural Right and Freedom, and made use of it on proper Occasions, as the Government fit. *Eli* the High Priest judged *Israel* forty Years and both High Priests, Priests, and Levites, are mentioned, as Ministers of State, Judges, and Officers.

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Custom hath been long condemned, that Priests should be Soldiers and Men of Blood. And yet the Case is certain, as to the *Jews*, 1 *Chron.* xxii. 23. the Army is thus reckoned up: *These are the Numbers of the Bands that were ready armed to the War.*—In which Number we find the Priests, & 27, 28. *Jehoiada was the Leader of the Aaronites, and with him were three thousand and seven hundred. And Zadock, a young Man mighty in Valour, and of his Father's House, twenty and two Captains.* All these were Priests, as were those their Leaders, *Jehoiada* and *Zadok*, 2 *Sam.* viii. 17, 18. being Sons of *Aaron*, as we also find *Benaiah*, Captain of *David's* Guards, one of the same Family and Office.

After the Restoration from the Captivity, down to the Days of our Saviour, the Priests were notoriously Generals, Soldiers, Judges, Statesmen, and chief Ministers of State; and even Kings, without any Reproof or Mark of Illegality taken Notice of by our Saviour, or his Apostles, just as they might be Teachers in the Synagogue, and Doctors of the Law. But they enjoyed none of these Posts in Right of their Priesthood, they were only allowed to them, as to any other qualified *Jew*.

All the Priests were called holy, because of their Relation to God, as set apart to his Service; but beside them, there were three Sorts of holy Persons, set apart for God's Service, the Levites, Nazarites, and first-born.

The *Levites* were the rest of the Tribe of *Levi*, who were not of the Seed of *Aaron*. Their Office was to minister to the Priests, as the Priests did before the Lord. *Numb.* xviii. speaking to the Priests, God saith, *And I, behold, I have taken your Brethren the Levites from among the Children of Israel, to you they are given as a Gift for the Lord, to do the Service of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.* They were under the Direction of the Priests, a kind of Servants to them. While the Tabernacle continued, their Business

ness was to take it down, and set it up; to carry it about as the Host removed; and to take Care of all the Things belonging to it. But after the Building of the Temple, that Part of their Office ceased of course, and they were made Porters, Singers, Musicians, and Treasurers to the Temple, and kept Guard about it. Such of them as lived in the Country, being Men of leisure, applied themselves to Learning, and were qualified, and frequently appointed to be Judges, and Doctors, to answer Doubts and Questions about the Law. They also wrote the public Records, and Genealogies, and were employed to write out Copies of the Law. In Process of Time they also became Generals of Armies, and Counsellors of State to the King, principal Advancers of Learning and Knowledge, and excelled in all the Arts and Sciences of these Ages. Hence also the Schools of the Prophets, and Universities of the Land, came frequently under their Government: For they being very numerous, a small Part of them were sufficient to attend their Office in the Temple; the rest applied themselves to all Employments proper for Men of Learning, and liberal Education.

A *Nazarite* was no ecclesiastical Person, but one who, by his own Act, in a solemn Vow, had consecrated and devoted himself to some particular Acts of Devotion for a longer or shorter Time.

And the *First-born* were holy by God's Designation, but their Holiness or Separation continued only until their Price of Redemption were paid; after which they were esteemed no more holy than any other *Israelite*.

Among the Priests, of whom we have so largely discoursed, there was one called the *High Priest*, who was invested with great Dignity and Power, and many Prerogatives above his Brethren, which do not fall properly under our Consideration, as making no Difference in the Nature and End of his Office,

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though of an higher Order; for he also represented the People to God, made an Atonement for them by Sacrifice, recommended their Prayers by offering Incense, and blessed them. What any Priest might do at the Altar, he did once a Year in the Most Holy, by sprinkling the Blood within the Veil; but that doth not make a distinct Office.

As the Priests were of the Family of *Aaron*, some have supposed, that the High Priesthood was limited to the eldest Sons of that House, and made hereditary in that Sense by a divine Right; but I can find no such lineal Succession of eldest Sons, and their eldest Sons.

In fixing the Succession of the High Priest to the Line of *Aaron*, it is particularly ordered, *Exod. xxix. 29, 30. That the holy Garments of Aaron shall be his Sons after him, to be anointed therein, and to be consecrated in them; and that Son, that is Priest in his Stead, shall put them on seven Days, &c.* where the cautious Way of expressing, *that Son that is Priest in his Stead*, seemeth designed to leave a Latitude in the Choice. The very same Caution is observed, *Levit. xvi. 32. The Priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate, to minister in the Priest's Office in his Father's Stead.* This Caution in the Expression seemeth to carry more in it, than barely the Exclusion of a Son who had a Blemish seemeth to require, for he was reputed as dead before.

Aaron had only two surviving Sons, *Eleazar* and *Ithamar*, from whom the whole Race of the Priesthood descended. *Eleazar* succeeded his Father *Aaron*, not by virtue of any Law of Primogeniture that I can find. Some may indeed conjecture, that the High Priesthood was intailed on *Phinehas* the Son of *Eleazar*, when in his Zeal he executed Judgment on *Dabi* and *Zimri*, *Numb. xxv.* For there God promiseth to him and his Seed after him, the Covenant of

an everlasting Priesthood: but the Promise is made to his Seed, not to his eldest Son; wherefore if any of his Offspring was High Priest, the Promise is fulfilled. But indeed there is no Promise at all of the High Priesthood, but of the Simple Priesthood; and the Meaning is no more, than that the Priests of the Line of *Phinebas* should not fail.

Since then there is no Authority for such an Intail in the Law, let us consult Practice, and see how the *Jews* understood the Law. We find *Eli*, and his Sons after him, High Priests, and yet they were of the Line of *Ithamar*; nor do we read of any particular Reason why it was translated from the Line of *Eleazar* to that of *Ithamar*. This giveth us room to conjecture, that a fitter Person was found in the other Line.

Again, God took the Office from them, and restored it to the Line of *Eleazar*, in the Person of *Zadok*, who was put in the room of *Abiathar*, who was of the Line of *Ithamar*. And this was done, not because *Ithamar's* Line was against any Law, but because of *Eli's* Indulgence to his wicked Sons, see 1 *Sam.* ii. 35. and 1 *Kings* ii. 35. And that *Zadok* was of the Line of *Eleazar* we know from 1 *Chron.* vi. 8. and *Abiathar* was the Son of *Abimeleck*, 1 *Sam.* xxiii. 6. which *Abimeleck* was of the Seed of *Ithamar*, 1 *Chron.* xxiv. 3. for *Solomon* thrust out *Abiathar*, to fulfil the Word spoken to *Eli*, 1 *Kings* ii. 27.

After the Restoration from the Captivity, the Practice of the *Jews* demonstrates, that they understood the Law in a Sense different from any such Intail. The *Maccabees* were Priests advanced to the High Priesthood, as well as to the Kingdom, for their Zeal and Valour. In our Saviour's Time, as it had been under the Government of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and the Syrian Kings, he that could buy the Office, or had most Interest with the Heathen Governor, always carried the Post, provided he was a Priest. And

neither

neither the *Jews* nor our Saviour complain of this as an Innovation or Breach of the Law; but both Christ and St. Paul allow of these annual High Priests as lawful, and treat them as such; and yet it is impossible, that two or more eldest Sons of the Family could have a lineal Right to it at once.

The Reason why God established such a Multitude of Rites and Ceremonies, and Laws about clean and unclean Things and Persons, so various and different from the Customs of all their neighbouring Nations, was evidently to preserve them from Idolatry, to keep them, as he himself declareth, a separate People, distinct from all the People of the Earth. And by this Means, it would evidently appear, that the *Messias* was of that Nation and Family when he came, according to the Tenure of all the antient Prophecies concerning him.

And the Priests were instituted to take Care, and perform all these Rites of external Religion, to preserve the People in that Separation; to expiate their Offences, reconcile them to God when they offended, and recommend their Prayers; to solve all their Difficulties in regard to the ceremonial Law, and Cases of Conscience: But internal Religion, and the necessary Duties of Morality, were not entrusted to their Care; the preaching and explaining these more weighty Matters, wherein true Religion only consisteth, were committed to another Order of Men, which we are next to consider.

C H A P. III.

Of the PROPHETS, and their Office among the JEWS.

THE Prophets were an Order of Men instituted by God, to explain and make known his Will

to Mankind; to instruct the People in their whole Duty, and reprove their Faults, and reform their Lives. God by *Moses* maketh his Promise to the *Israelites*, *Deut. xviii. 15.* *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the Midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken.* St. *Peter*, *Acts iii. 22*, applies this Prophecy to the *Messias*, and so doth St. *Stephen*, *Acts vii. 37.* and also the *Jewish* Rabbies themselves; yet they do not seem to be mistaken, when they apply it also to a Succession of Prophets, as a standing Office in the *Jewish* Church. For in the 20th Verse, when he foretels the Rising of false Prophets, he expresses them also in the singular Number, and in such a Manner, that he supposeth both the true and false should be more than one.

But however that Case be, it is certain, that there was such a Succession of Prophets in that Nation from the Days of *Moses* to the Captivity. And even after their Return from it, some of them were in Being. We find of them in the Days of the Judges, and from *Eli* to *David* mention is made of *Samuel*, *Gad*, *Nathan*, *Asaph*, *Heman*, and *Jeduthan*. From thence to the Captivity, all those flourished, whose Writings are preserved, beside several others whose Names are only mentioned.

Although God was sometimes pleased to inspire any Person whom he thought proper to send on a particular Message, yet his usual Method seemeth to have had regard to such as were trained up in the Schools, and there fitted for the prophetick Office. This appeareth from many Passages in the History of the *Jewish* Nation, which can scarce admit of a tolerable Sense, unless we allow of these prophetick Schools, where Candidates were instructed and prepared for their Office, either for the common Business of an ordinary Prophet, or for any extraordinary Message or Expedition, wherein God,

the greater Prophets, should think fit to employ them.

We find one of these Schools at *Naioth* in *Rama*, where the *Jewish* Writers are very positive there was a *Domus Doctrinae*, or School of the Prophets. Thither *David* fled from *Saul*, and lived with *Samuel*, 1 Sam. xix. 18. And thither *Saul* sent Messengers after him, three several Times, who, when they came to the Prophets, were immediately inspired, and joined in their prophetical Exercises. And when *Saul* went, at last, himself, as soon as he arrived at *Naioth*, he was also inspired, and joined in the same Exercise.

These Schools seem to have been under the Charge and Tuition of one of the greater Prophets, who was a kind of Provost or Master of the College. Thus the Rabbies understand 1 Sam. xix. 20. *And when they saw the Company of the Prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them.* The Chaldee Paraphrase renders these Words thus, *Samuel stood as a Teacher or Master over them.*

These Scholars, or Disciples, are called, by an usual *Hebraism*, the *Sons of the Prophets*, which the Targum on 1 Sam. x. 5, calleth a *Company of Scribes*. Whether it be, that as the Name *Scribe* was given, in the Days of the Targum, to such as taught and expounded the Law, it therefore gives the same Name to the Disciples of the Prophets, who executed that Office in their Days; or they were really, even then, known by that Name. *R. Kimchi* asserts they were, upon that Place of the Targum. "For (saith he) the Scholars of the wise Men were called Scribes, for they were the Scholars of the greater Prophets, and these Scholars were called the Sons of the Prophets; now the greater Prophets who lived in that Time, from *Eli* to *David*, were *Samuel*, *Gad*, *Nathan*, *Asaph*, *Heman*, and *Jedathan*."

To the same Purpose the *Chaldee Paraphrast* translates that Question made 1 Sam. x. 12. *Who is their Father?* by these Words, *Who is their Master?* because, as the Scholars are called the *Sons* of the Prophets, so their Masters were called their *Fathers*. And *R. Levi Ben Gerson* saith, “*Samuel* was called their Father, because that *Samuel* instructed them, and trained them up, by his Discipline, to a Degree of prophetical Perfection.”

We find another School of these Prophets at *Gilgal*, whose Master seemeth to have been *Elisha*, 2 Kings iv. 38. *And Elisha came again to Gilgal, and there was a Dearth in the Land, and the Sons of the Prophets were sitting before him; and he said unto his Servant, Set on the great Pot, and seeth Pottage for the Sons of the Prophets.* The Number of these Disciples, or Scholars, were an hundred, & 43, who, it seemeth, lived and eat in common after the Manner of a Collegiate Life.

Bethel and *Jericho* had each of them one of these Colleges, 2 Kings ii. For when *Elijah* was to be taken away, he went first to *Bethel*, where the Sons of the Prophets of that Place came forth to meet him. Thence he went to *Jericho*, where he was also met by the Sons of the Prophets of that Place. And fifty of the Scholars of *Jericho* went to view the Sequel, and searched in vain three Days for him in the Mountains.

Elisha was Master of the School at *Gilgal*, when he cured *Naaman* the Syrian; and his Scholars increased to such a Number, that the House could not contain them, which obliged them to enlarge their Apartments, 2 Kings vi. 1. And this is a full Proof that they lived there, as in a College, under the Government of *Elisha*.

Another of these Schools was at *Jerusalem*, where *Huldah* the Prophetess lived in the College, as we translate it, 2 Kings xxii. 14. The *Chaldee Paraphrase* calleth it, *Domus Doctrinae*, and *Kimchi*, *Bethmidiafah*, or a School. This College, we are told, was within the second Wall of the City.

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As these several Schools at *Naioth*, *Jerusalem*, *Be-
thel*, *Jericho*, and *Gilgal*, are only mentioned occa-
sionally, we have Reason to believe there might be
more of them, according to the Observation of *R.
Kimchi*, "As the Sons of the Prophets were in *Be-
thel* and *Jericho*, so were there also of them in
"several other Places." Otherwise there would not
have been enough of them to instruct the People, as,
we shall see in the Sequel, their Office required them
to do.

This we are sure of, that they were in considerable
Numbers. When *Saul* was seeking his Father's Asses,
he met a Company of them, 1 *Sam.* x. 5. And they
are generally expressed by Words of Multitude, when-
ever they are represented as resident in any Place.
We have already observed, that there were an hun-
dred at *Gilgal*, and when the wicked *Jezebel* thought
she had destroyed all the Prophets of the Lord, her
Officer *Obadiab* secured an hundred of them from her
Rage, hiding them by Fifties in Caves, 2 *Kings*
xviii. 4.

The greater Prophets had usually this kind of Edu-
cation, except *Samuel*, who was brought up in the
Temple, on a particular Occasion. *Elisha* was one
of *Elijah's* Scholars, and by him fitted to be his Suc-
cessor. When *Jebozophat*, in the 2 *Kings* iii. 2. en-
quired if a Prophet of the Lord was present, it was
thought sufficient to prove, that *Elisha* was a Prop-
her, because he had been *Elijah's* Disciple, and poured Wa-
ter on his Hands, that is, had ministred to him, as the
Jewish Scholiasts observe.

The greater Prophets made use of these Scholars,
young Prophets, to carry prophetick Messages.
2 *Kings* ix. 1. *Elisha* sent one of the Sons of the
Prophets, to anoint *Jehu* King of *Israel*. And in
Kings xx. 15. the young Prophet who was sent to
prove *Abab*, for sparing *Benbadad* King of *Syria*, is
called

called by the *Chaldee* Paraphrast, one of *the Sons*, or *Disciples*, of *the Prophets*.

Hence it is, that the Prophet *Amos* taketh Notice of his own Commission, as of an extraordinary Nature, *Amos* vii. 14. *I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son*, that is, as *Abarbanel* truly glosseth it, "I was not prepared for Prophecy, nor trained up so "as to be fitted for the prophetical Function, by "being a Disciple, or Son of the Prophets." The divine Inspiration came upon him, out of the ordinary Road of Prophets, among the Herds of Cattle. He was moved in an extraordinary Way to go to *Bethel*, there to declare God's Judgments against King and People, in the King's own Chapel. Mr. *Smith*, page 256, observeth, from these Disciples of the greater Prophets, that when *John* the Baptist and our Saviour appeared preaching Repentance, and calling Disciples to attend upon them and learn the divine Oracles from them, they practised no new Thing, but followed the known Custom of the old Prophets.

Having thus proved that the Prophets were a numerous Body, trained up in Schools to their Office, our next Enquiry must be into the Nature and End of their Office, and principal Employment. And we shall find, that the foretelling future Events, and making known new Revelations, was not their ordinary and common Business, but an extraordinary Part of it, granted to some of the greater Prophets, as particular Occasions required, when God had any new Message to send to his own or any other People.

Their Office was very different from that of the Priests: as the Priests were wholly conversant in the Externals, and ceremonial Part of Religion, so the Prophets whole Business was about the internal Worship and real Religion. The Priests had relation to instituted Worship, and the Prophets to Morality and the inward Sense and Fear of God. The Priests re-

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presented the People to God, and made Atonements and Reconciliation for them; and the Prophets represented God to the People, and delivered a Message from him, endeavoured to reconcile Men to their true Duty, and explained the whole Will of God, however made known, by Nature or Revelation, by the ancient Scriptures, or Revelations made to themselves, in order to make Men not only pious and devout, but just and upright, merciful and peaceable. In a Word, their Business was to press the People to the Observance of the whole Law of God, natural and revealed, moral and positive, and to set home to their Consciences the Rewards and Punishments, promised or denounced in the Divine Law.

Mr. *Thorndike*, in his *Religious Assemblies*, and Mr. *Lewis* in his *Antiquities*, both observe, That the Occasion of the Institution of the Prophetick Schools arose from the Resort which the People had to the high Places, for sacrificing, during the Captivity, or uncertain Abode, of the Ark of God, after the Desolation of *Shiloh*. For the People assembling at these Places, to perform their Sacrifices, it was ordered that a Company of the Prophets should be there resident, to bless the Sacrifices, and to instruct the People.—By the Prophets in these Schools was the Purity of Religion preserved among the ten Tribes after the Defection in the Time of *Jeroboam*. For the People resorted to them upon the solemn Festivals, where they were instructed, and had Lectures upon the Law read to them. And Mr. *Thorndike* adds, that this was not only the Beginning of these Schools, but of Synagogues also.

Rabbi Kimchi on the 2 *Kings* ii. 4. giveth much the same Reason of these Schools, for he judiciously observes, that “as the Sons of the Prophets were in *Bethel* and *Jericho*, so were there also of them in several other Places; and the main Reason why they were thus dispersed in many of the Cities of

“ *Israel*

“ *Israel* was, that they might reprove the *Israelites* that were there. And their Prophecy was wholly according to the Exigency of those Times, and therefore it was, that their Prophecy was not committed to Writing.” So that, according to these Authors, Reproof and Instruction were their principal Business. They were to be on the Watch and take notice of every Breach of God’s Law, and endeavour to see it observed; or, in other Words, they were Preachers of Righteousness.

But let us consult the Prophets themselves, we shall receive the most Light from them. Their Discourses consist almost entirely of Exhortations, Reproofs, and Instructions, about the whole Law of God, whether known by Nature, called the moral Law, or Revelation contained in the inspired Scriptures, or peculiarly made to themselves. They always speak to the People in the Name of God, and generally begin with this awful Preface, *Thus saith the Lord*, and their Sermons were Lessons of Morality, and Injunctions to observe every Part of the revealed Law.

The Prophet *Jeremy* gives this Account of their Employment, *Jer.* xxv. 4, 5. *The Lord hath sent unto you all his Servants the Prophets, rising early and sending them, but ye have not hearkened nor inclined your Ear to hear. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil Way, and from the Evil of his Doings, &c.* So also, *Jer.* xxxv. 15.

When God sent the *Chaldeans* against the *Jews*, and led them into a long and bitter Captivity, the Reason given for this severe Punishment, is not because they refused to hearken to the Priests, for they were not their Teachers; but because neither Priest nor People would hearken to God’s Messengers the Prophets, 2 *Chron.* xxxvi. 14, 15, &c. Moreover all the chief of the Priests and the People transgressed very much.—And the Lord of their Fathers sent to them by his Messengers—but they mocked the Messengers of God,

God, and despised his Words, and misused his Prophets, — therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldees.

Although these Prophets preached Obedience to the whole Law of God, yet internal Religion, Sincerity and Purity, the invariable Laws of Good and Evil, were their principal and chief Subject. They made a great Difference between true Virtue, and instituted Worship; and exalted the natural Duties far above the other. They even depreciated all the ceremonial and positive Precepts, when void of sincere Righteousness, as much as our Saviour did in the Gospels. In this Style we find them preaching loudly against Idolatry and Injustice, and as much commending Justice, Judgment, Charity, Temperance, and Chastity, with true Repentance; these weighty Matters of the Law, while they undervalue the Temple Service, and external Observances when not accompanied with clean Hands and a pure Heart.

This is the Language of *Isaiah*, i. 10. *Hear the Word of the Lord, ye Rulers of Sodom—To what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the Burnt-Offerings of Rams, and the Fat of fed Beasts, and I delight not in the Blood of Bullocks.—Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes, cease to do Evil, learn to do well, seek Judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the Widow.*

The Prophet *Micah*, vi. 7, 8. preacheth in the same Strain. *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of Rams, or with ten thousands of Rivers of Oil.—He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

This is the general Language of all the Prophets; their very Prophecies, properly so called, when they pretell future Events, tend to the same End. For they are usually Denunciations of Judgments for the Peoples

Peoples Vices and Immoralities, or Promises of good Things upon their Repentance.

As the Priests Office, by Law, was confined to external and symbolical Religion, and the ceremonial Part of Worship; moral Virtue was of too great Consequence to be left unregarded. God thought it deserved the Care of a particular Order of Men, who should speak in his own Name and by his Authority. When our Saviour exalted the substantial Duties of Righteousness, Justice, Mercy and Truth, above all the positive Statutes of the Law, he delivered no new Doctrine; the Prophets had before declared these to be the most necessary and essential Duties of Men; Things of that Importance, that God hath made the Sense of them congenial to human Nature, and the Obligation prior to all Revelation. God would never suffer Things of so great Value and Consequence to Religion, to Society, to every private Man's Good, to lie uncultivated. And since the Priests were restrained to the less noble Part of Religion, to mere Externals; he appointed another Order of Men, to attend to these more excellent Things in a peculiar Manner. And these were the Prophets, and this was the Nature and Design of their Office. They continued their Instructions until the People were led into Captivity, and some short Time after their Restoration, and then we hear no more of them. Our next Enquiry is, who were the Teachers and Preachers of Righteousness from the ceasing of the Prophets, to the Time of the *Messias*.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Officers and Service of the JEWISH SYNAGOGUES.

AFTER the Restoration from the Captivity we read of no Prophets, except *Zachary*
Haggai

Haggai, and *Malachy*, who lived at that Time, and seemed to be raised up to instruct and encourage the distressed People, until they were somewhat settled in the Land.

When the Prophets no more appeared, the *Jews* took a new Method to preserve and propagate the Knowledge and Practice of true Religion among them, by erecting Synagogues and appointing a Service in them. I call it new, because I can find no Traces of it before that Time. And all Authors, ancient and modern, date them from the ceasing of the Prophets, and suppose them to be founded in some Measure to supply their Place.

Some indeed think the Law gave them Licence to erect Synagogues for divine Service, which they gather from *Levit. xxiii. 3.* where *Moses* giving Directions about the Observation of the Feasts, adds, *Six Days shall Work be done, but the seventh is a Sabbath of Rest, an holy Convocation.* By an *holy Convocation*, they think we should understand an Assembly of the People for divine Worship, which could not be held at the Tabernacle or the Temple, because the Thing was impossible for all the Nation to do every seventh Day. Hence they collect, that Authority is hereby given them to assemble in their several Cities and Towns for divine Service; and such Places of Assembly, Synagogues were in After-times; and that this Text also gave rise to the first Assemblies to hear the Prophets at their Schools, or where they dwelt.

But whatever be the Meaning of that Text, it doth not appear that the Synagogue Service was ever observed until the Days of *Ezra*, or perhaps for some Time after. It seemeth probable, that during their Captivity they met together in some Places to perform their Devotions, and that this Practice was afterwards turned into the Synagogue Service. For not long after the

the Restoration, we find Synagogues erected in most Places where a sufficient Number of People could assemble to form a Congregation, and proper Officers among them to read and expound the Scriptures, and to join in publick Prayers.

And this Regulation was approved and allowed by our Saviour and his Apostles, who did not only honour them with his Presence, but constantly frequented them, and took all proper Occasions in these Places to preach his own Doctrine: Whence it appears, that although God was very particular in ordering the external Ceremonies of Religion, yet in Things of a moral Nature, and what Times, Places, and Actions should be used about the Instructions and Exercise of them, he was not at all nice or scrupulous, provided the Substantials were observed; since he who so minutely prescribed the one, left all the External of the other to human Prudence. The Manner of preaching Virtue, the Times, Places, and Circumstances, and their publick Liturgy, were left to the Choice and Prudence of Men, and our Saviour joined in the Manner they had contrived.

Although the precise Time when Synagogues were first erected, and introduced into the *Jewish* Church cannot now be determined, it is however pretty clear that it was not until Prophecy had ceased. And it is very certain that they were very numerous, and had been long established when our Saviour appeared.

The End of their Institution, and the religious Exercises there performed, are very well known. The People assembled in these Places to offer their Prayers to God, and to hear the Law read, preached, and explained. *Philo*, whose Testimony in this Case is beyond Exception, telleth us, their principal Business was to hear the Law read and expounded. He gives the Account of them in his Book, entitled, *Omniem probum liberum esse*. “ When they come to their holy Place

“ call

“ called Synagogues, they sit down in convenient
 “ Order, according to their several Forms, ready to
 “ hear, the younger under the elder, then one taketh
 “ the Book and readeth, another of such as are best
 “ skilled cometh after, and expoundeth what was not
 “ easy to be understood.”

The Constitution of the Synagogue, as far as can
 be gathered from the scattered Remains of their Wri-
 ters, and the Practice of the *Jews*, seemeth to be as
 followeth.

It was a received Rule, that a Synagogue could not
 be erected in any Town, where they could not have
 at least ten Men to attend Divine Service three Days
 every Week. And therefore in Country Places where
 that Number could not be had to give their constant
 Attendance, they erected Oratories called *Proseuchæ*,
 where People might either retire or assemble to pray,
 but they had no Reading or Preaching in these Places.
 These *Proseuchæ* were open Courts, walled in on every
 Side without any Covering.

The Reason why ten Men, called *Batelnim*, in their
 Language, were required to attend three Days every
 Week in the Synagogue, was because, as they di-
 vided the Law into Lessons, called Sections, one of
 which was read every Day wherein they assembled;
 every Section, or Lesson for the Day, was divided
 into seven Parts, each of which was read by a different
 person, called out by one of the three Officers sepa-
 rately at his Pleasure. They first called a Priest and
 then a *Levite*, and the other five might be any *Israe-
 lite*, as might also the two first be, in case no Priest
 or *Levite* were present.

The other three *Batelnim*, were the Officers of the
 Synagogue, who are called Rulers, and were set apart
 by Ordination and Imposition of Hands. It is dis-
 puted whether the Rulers were three or two, but it is
 agreed they were more than one; they are also called
 Elders; one of them was called *Sheliachzibbor*, or
 Angel

Angel of the Church, another was called *Chasan*, i. e. Overseer, and answereth to the import of the Word Bishop. One of these Rulers, read the Liturgy or publick Prayers, the Office of another was to call out Persons to read the Lessons, to overlook them and see that they read them right. We find mention also of the Minister or Deacon, who had the Charge of the sacred Books and other Things in the Synagogue, and took Care of the Poor.

Although all these three Officers be named by most Authors as Rulers of the Synagogue, yet Authors are much divided as to their several Functions, but what is above related seems the most probable. We read also of another Person employed in the Synagogue, called the Interpreter. And his Business was to render the *Hebrew* Text into the vulgar Tongue of the Country, and was generally retained for that Purpose by a set Salary. When the Service was done, if a Priest were present he pronounced the Blessing, if not the *Sheliathzippor* pronounced it. Any *Israelite* might be a Ruler of the Synagogue, if duly qualified with Learning and ordained. A Priest or *Levite* was capable of the Office, but had no Right to it as a Priest or *Levite*, for the Rulers were chosen according to their Qualifications.

These Rulers received Profelytes by Baptism, as the antient Prophets used to receive their Disciples. And they pronounced Sentence of Excommunication according to the Nature of the Offence, or the Order of the *Sanhedrim*.

Their Liturgy was long and tedious, and consisted of many Collects. And after Prayers and reading of the Law, the last part of their Service was preaching and expounding the Scriptures. Some think that Office was performed by the Elders and *Rabbins* ordained for that Purpose. Others take it to be the Office of the *Chasan*, and look upon that Officer to be the *Darshan*, that is Inquirer, and that St. Paul allude

alludes to him in 1 Cor. i. 20. by his *Inquirer* or *Disputer of this World*.

But it appeareth from the *New Testament*, that no Officer was appropriated to that Office, so as to exclude others. But that one of the Rulers might either preach, or call out any learned Man in the Congregation to perform that Office. After this Manner our Saviour was sometimes called out, and sometimes offered himself to that Office. - And *Acts* xiii. 15. the Rulers of the Synagogue sent to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, after the reading of the Law, that if they had any Word of Exhortation, they should speak.

Wherefore if there were any Officer of that Kind, he was not so fixt, but that any Person who had some Repute for Religion and Knowledge in the Law, was allowed a Liberty to speak for the Instruction of the People. Although in later Times, which vary much from the ancient, the *Chazan* was the Preacher, as appeareth from *Benjamin Fadelensis* in his *Itinerary*.

We are at no loss to know the Subject of their Sermons; for as they read the whole Law and the Prophets, and their Sermons were mostly Expositions of the Lessons, these Discourses must have been to explain the whole Will of God, every moral and religious Subject. For this Reason our Saviour and his Apostles, took that Opportunity to preach the *Messias*, and all the Doctrines that depend on that Article. And it was owing to this constant Reading and Exposition of the Scriptures, that the *Jews*, who were so apt to fall into Idolatry before the Captivity, were so zealous against it after their Return.

It appeareth from this Account that the Reading of the Scriptures by way of Lessons, Preaching a publick Liturgy or Form of Prayers, Baptism and Excommunication, were known Practices in the Synagogue Service. And we shall find them not only approved and practised by our Saviour and his Apostles, but introduced and applied to the Use of the

Christian Church so far as was consistent and agreeable to the Nature of the Gospel. And if we had Monuments to discover fully the Order and Degrees of the Rulers of the Synagogue, I make no great Question, but we should find as near a Resemblance to those of the Christian Church.

C H A P. V.

Of the PRIESTHOOD and Teachers of Morality among the Heathen.

THE general Nature of the Priesthood among the Heathen, was the same as that among the Jews. Their Priests were an Order of Men appointed to reconcile the Gods to the People by attending and performing all their Ceremonies and sacred Rites, and their whole Care and Employment was about the Externals of Religion, Morality did not so much as enter into their Notion of it.

Cicero defineth Religion by its Ceremonies, *de Invent.* lib. ii. *Religionem, eam, quæ in meta, et ceremoniâ Deorum sit, appellant;—Religio est, quæ superioris cuiusdam naturæ (quam divinam vocant) curam Ceremoniæ amque affert. —Religio Deorum cultu pio continetur.* *De Nat. Deorum, lib. i.* And when Piety is applied to the Gods, he defineth it, *Pietas est Justitia adversum Deos.*

Although the Object of the Jewish Worship, and their particular Ceremonies, were widely different from those of the Heathen, yet their general Notion of the Priesthood was the same. As the Office of the Jewish Priests consisted in their performing their Expiations, Eucharistical Rites, and Sacrifices, so did that of the Heathen, who had infinitely different Rites according to the Multiplicity and Diversity of their Gods.

Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Barbarians, all agreed in this Notion, that their Gods were principally incensed by the Neglect of some religious

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Rite or Ceremony, and that the only Method to appease them, was by the Performance of such Rite, or Ceremony. Some of these Methods to appease the Gods were as ridiculous as the imagined Cause of their Anger. The polite *Romans* on some such Occasions offered human Sacrifices. And sometimes with great Ceremony drove a Nail into the Door of the Capitol. The neglecting any of their Auspices, or the chirping of their Chickens was esteemed a piacular Crime which required more Expiation than Murder.

We have an excellent Account of the Nature and Office of the *Roman* Priesthood, and of their Superstition, in *Cicero's* second Book of Laws, where he proposeth an Instance of the antient Stile of the *Roman* Laws, and of the Method to induce the People to pass them. The Instance is about Religion; and *Atticus*, who is one of the Persons in the Dialogue, telleth *Cicero*, that the Law he proposed; was in brief, the Substance of *Numa's* Laws, and of the *Roman* Customs.

Divis aliis, alii Sacerdotes, omnibus Pontifices, singulis Flamines sunt ——— Eorum autem duo genera sunt. Unum quod præsit Cæremoniis et sacris, alterum quod interpretetur fatidicorum et vatium effata incognita, cum senatus populusque adscriverit.

Here are two Orders of Ministers. The first only are properly Priests, who presided over their Ceremonies and sacred Rites, and are ranked under three Heads, Priests, Pontiffs, and Flamins. The Priests performed all the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of Religion. The Pontiffs gave Judgment in all Cases relating to Religion, inquired into the Behaviour of the inferior Priests about the Discharge of their Office, punished them if they saw Occasion, prescribed Rules for publick Worship, and regulated the Feasts and sacred Institutions. The Flamins were the chief Priests of some particular Deity, as the *Flamen Dialis* and *Martialis*, to *Jupiter* and *Mars*; he was esteemed

a very honourable Officer, had many Privileges, and only one could be made to any one God.

The second Sort of Ministers mentioned by *Cicero*, were not Priests, but Augurs and Aruspices, designed to be the Interpreters of the Mind of the Gods, signified to them as they thought, by the Sibylline, and other Oracles, by Signs in the Heavens, or any extraordinary Event, which that superstitious People esteemed portentous or ominous; and they directed by what Rites or Ceremonies these Omens might be averted.

Cicero explains their Office more fully, how they were employed about Vineyards, Fields, and the common Good of the People; their Auspices of Peace and War; how they might preserve their Crops, and Cattle, by preventing the Anger portended by Thunder and Lightening; when they should consult the *Tuscans* about Prodigies; or how to expiate any ill Omens or Impiety of the People toward their Gods.

In his third Book *De Nat. Deorum*, he giveth us another Division, with his own Opinion of the Roman Religion. *Cumque omnis P. R. Religio in sacra et Auspicia divisa sunt; tertium adjunctam fit, si quid prædictionis causa, ex portentis et monstris, Sibyllæ interpretes, haruspicesque monuerant; harum ego Religionum nullam unquam contemnendam putavi, mihi que ita persuasi, Romulum Auspiciis, Numam sacris constitutis, fundamenta jecisse nostræ civitatis, quæ nunquam profecto sine summa placatione Deorum immortalium tanta esse potuissent.*

But in a Case so well known there needeth no laborious Proof, since all the Books of the Heathens conspire to give us this Notion of their Religion, that it consisted in external Ceremonies; and that the Priesthood was appointed to take Care of, and perform these same Ceremonies; and to worship their Gods by them.

As to moral Virtues, which Christianity has embodied, and made an essential Part of Religion, they

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were enjoined and required by the Heathen, but not on a religious Account, nor did these Things any way concern the Priest's Office; they were looked upon as necessary to Society, and the Good of the State, or agreeable to the Dignity of a Man and a Citizen.

While a publick Spirit governed the *Romans* their Love for the Good of the State, and a Principle of Honour, preserved the Love and Practice of Virtue; but as that Spirit began to fail, and Men sold their Honour and Country for private Gain, their Religion furnished them with no Arguments to support the Cause of expiring Morality.

But then the Philosophers began to appear; their Profession was, to explain and inculcate the Rules of moral Virtue from the more general Principles of Nature and Reason, and they proved it with all the Arguments their Wit and Leisure could furnish them with; and they not only insisted on the old Topicks of the Good of the State, and the Dignity of human Nature, but they added the Pleasure, Profit, and Happiness of the virtuous Person; and at last, recommended the Imitation of the Deity, and Obedience to his Will. But as they had very obscure Notions of a future State, and spoke very dubiously, and with much Uncertainty, of future Rewards and Punishments, their Arguments were too metaphysical for vulgar Capacities, and made little Impression on any but some few philosophical Heads.

These Philosophers began, by Degrees, to see the Vanity of their outside Religion, and dropt several Expressions which struck at the Superstition of their publick Ceremonies. They endeavoured obscurely to draw Men off, from an external to an internal Worship and Reverence of the Deity. Thus *Cicero de Nat. Deorum*, Lib. II. *Cultus autem Deorum est optimus idemque castissimus, et sanctissimus, plenissimusque pietatis, ut eos semper pura, integra, et incorrupta, et*

mente, et voce, veneremur, non enim Philosophi solum, verum etiam Majores nostri superstitionem a Religione separaverunt. And in his *Orat. pro Cluentio, Pietate et Religione et Justis precibus, Deorum mentes, non Contaminata superstitione, neque ad Scelus perficiendum castis hostiis, posse placari.* So that in some Sort, the Philosophers proposed the same Ends among the Heathen, that the Prophets were appointed for among the *Jews*; to inculcate real Virtue, and to call Men off from Superstition.

Pursuant to this received Notion of the Office of the Priests and Philosophers, we find the Satyrists take very little Notice of the wicked Lives of the Priests, provided they observed the Ceremonies of Religion, whose Immorality they thought no Fault of the Priest, but of the Man; while they unmercifully lash the immoral Lives of the Philosophers, because their Practice was a constant Lie to their Profession.

Yet some of these Philosophers, especially of the Stoicks, were not only excellent Instructors, but Patterns of Virtue. Their Discourses flow in a very exalted Style, and tend to make reasonable Men in love with the Practice; while the Priests are silent on that Subject, as being foreign to their Office and Employment.

C H A P. VI.

*Reflections on what hath been delivered
in the foregoing Chapters.*

I. **I**T appears that all People, *Jews* and Heathens, had a firm Belief of a Providence; that God took Notice of the Actions of Men; that he might

be, and frequently was, provoked by them; and that, according to the Nature of their Offences, he inflicted divers Kinds of Punishments on particular Persons, and on whole Nations. This is the sole Foundation of all that Care and Anxiety they were under, to use all proper Means they could devise to appease the incensed Deity.

But they all seem to be mistaken in the Nature of the Offence; they place it in Superstition, in the Neglect of some of their religious Ceremonies. As the Heathen thought that the Mind of the Gods might be discovered by Auguries and Auspices, they looked upon the Neglect of these, either in consulting them, or in observing the Answers given that Way, as the most heinous Crimes. Any Mistake, or even involuntary Oversight, in performing any of their sacred Ceremonies, was enough, in their Opinion, to draw down the Wrath of Heaven upon them. And in order to avert the dreaded Vengeance for any of these Offences, they applied their utmost Diligence to appease the angry Deity.

They seem indeed to think, that the Gods were displeased with Immoralities; but it doth not appear, that they ever dreaded any national Calamity on that Account. We never find any Sacrifice or Atonement made use of, for Crimes of that Nature, unless in the Case of Murder among the antient *Grecians*, who made Provision of Lustrations and Purifications to cleanse the guilty Person. Although even that seemeth a Remainder of their first and more pure Religion, before they fell into their grosser Idolatry; for in After-times we read of no such Ceremony.

They looked upon Morality as a social Virtue, whose Reason was derived from the Good of Mankind, rather than from any Service of God; and they did not think the Neglect of it any direct Affront to the Deity, as the Neglect of Religion was, as being

ing his most immediate Service. Injustice and Immorality were Sins directly against Man, wherefore, in these Cases, they used no Methods to appease the Deity, whom they thought more provoked, and more ready to avenge himself for Crimes against his own Service, as Religion was, than for Crimes against his Subjects, as Immoralities were. The Philosophers indeed spoke another Language, but the Bulk of the People were not Philosophers.

We may observe also of the *Jews*, that in Spite of the solemn Declarations of the Prophets, they fell almost into the same superstitious Way of thinking, and placed all Religion in their external Worship; which gave Occasion to those solemn and frequent Rebukes of our Saviour, of the scrupulous Nicety in the Punctilio's of their external Religion, while they disregarded moral Virtue, as Things wherein Religion had little or no Concern.

II. We may observe that all People, *Jews* and Heathen, looked upon the Deity as placable. This Notion of God was universally spread through the whole World. Men never doubted, but by a proper Reparation to his injured Honour, and Acknowledgment of the Offence, they might be restored to his Favour, and the Punishment removed.

But we must also observe, that they never thought it arbitrary, or in their own Choice, what Methods they ought to make use of to atone for their Offences; they always thought the Terms of Reconciliation were lodged in the divine Breast, and must be discovered to them by some Revelation from him, before they could hope to appease him.

For this Reason we find all Law-givers who enacted any Laws about Sacrifices, or Expiations, always pretending some Commerce with a Deity, or the Answer of some Oracle, to confirm or establish such Laws, very well knowing, that People's Minds could

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never be secure, that the Gods were appeased, unless they declared the Manner themselves. Wherefore on every emergent Occasion, not provided for by their religious Laws, they never presumed to invent Methods of their own, but consulted the Deity, by Oracles, Auguries, or the Sibylline Prophecies, or some such Way, and very punctually observed the Directions given them in the Answers. If any immemorial Custom was observed, whereof they could give no Account, they easily resolved it into a divine Original.

The Opinion of God's Goodness was universally spread through all the Nations of the Universe, they called him *Optimus*, as well as *Maximus*; and as that Attribute included Mercy, they naturally inferred that he must be placable, and ready to be reconciled, upon a proper Application and Submission, but that such Application, and Submission, must be learned from himself.

It is therefore very observable, that all Nations of all Languages, and different Customs, who had any Religion since the World began, agreed in this Opinion, that Revelation was necessary, and that the Deity could not be acceptably served, nor possibly appeased, without the Direction of some such Revelation. *Greeks and Romans*, the *East and West-Indies*, all were persuaded of this Necessity. Into what Principle of human Nature shall we resolve this marvelous Consent and Agreement? Nothing appeareth so rational as to resolve it into a Tradition handed down from the first of Mankind, and first delivered to him by God himself.

III. A third Observation is, that all Nations, *Jews* and *Heathen*, agreed in this extraordinary Opinion, that the Deity could not be appeased without Blood. I call it extraordinary, because it hath no manner of Foundation in any of our natural Deductions. Their Prayers and Thanksgivings were often attended with
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Oblations without Blood; but all Atonements and Expiations were constantly made by the Sacrifice of some Animal.

This Law is as old as *Noah* and *Adam*; it was handed down by all the Patriarchs, and spread through *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*. From whence can it come? Not from Reason: It must then be from Tradition.

And indeed it seemeth contrived by Providence, as a standing Monument, and lasting Proof, of several important Things. 1. That the History of *Moses* is the only true Account of the original of Mankind; that they all sprung from one Man; for such an uniform Tradition could never be propagated from different Men, in remote and distant Parts of the World; since every Man must own that it hath no Foundation in our natural Reason.

2. That the Author of this Tradition must be God himself; for no Authority less than divine could have made so strong an Impression on the first Man and his Children, as to last through Ages and Generations, in a Thing so very remote from the Dictates of Reason, and yet this is the Case of this Tradition. 3. That the first Man sinned and offended God, before his Children were dispersed from him; otherwise, such Children as had left him would have wanted this Tradition, and therefore the Account that *Moses* giveth of the first Transgression is highly probable; for if there had been no Sin, there would have been no Occasion for an Expiation.

4. Christians are very much in the Right, and argue very strongly, when they infer from this Tradition, that God had formed a Resolution, in order to deter Men from Sin, that it should not be expiated without Blood; and that he ordered expiatory Sacrifices to prepare Men's Minds for the great Expiation by the Mediator, when he should appear in the World. If we abstract from divine Revelation, we shall find it

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very difficult, if not impossible, to give any tolerable Account or Reason, why Men should either fall at first into this Practice, or why the Impression first made was so strong, as to spread through all Countries and Ages. And without allowing the Christian Notion of a Mediator, it will be equally difficult to assign a Reason why God should at all appoint and approve it.

IV. We may observe the great Distinction made by the Heathen, between Religion and Morality, and even by the *Jews* themselves in their later Times, notwithstanding all the Pains the Prophets had taken to set them right, and to prefer inward and real Religion to the outward ceremonial. Religion, in their Opinion, consisting solely in such sacred Rites and Ceremonies as were performed in divine Service, whereas Morality was esteemed a Part of the Civil or State Laws. They knew Religion consisted in such Things to be done, as would recommend them to God's Favour; but they confined these Things to Rites and Ceremonies, and outward Actions. He that most punctually observed these was esteemed a religious Man. Their Notion of Holiness was purely relative, as it related to that external Service. Virtuous Men were called honest, just, and upright, but not holy. Immorality did not destroy this Character of relative Holiness, if they were employed in any holy Office.

Indeed, in the Old Testament, nothing is called holy, as it implies an internal Rectitude of the Mind, but God himself; other Things and Persons are called holy in that relative Sense, wherein God was supposed to have some Property.

In the *Jewish* Commonwealth, God was both their temporal and spiritual King, the Object of their Worship, and their Ruler and Lawgiver; whence *Moses* justly calleth it a *Theocracy*. In this double Capacity he gave them two Sorts of Laws, one as their God,

God, and the other as their King; the first religious, and the other civil. The religious Laws were mostly positive, and committed to the Care of the Priests. Their civil Law was of two Sorts, judicial and moral; the judicial Law was committed to the Magistrates, as was the moral partly, but principally to the Prophets.

When we consider the Occasion of giving the ceremonial Law, we seem to find Reason to conclude, that God's first Design was to make no Addition to the antient Method of Sacrifice and external Religion practised by *Abraham*, and to oblige the *Jews* to no other external Religion, but that in order to make them virtuous, he designed to add to the Obligation of the moral Law, and reveal it in a more explicit Manner. For after *Moses* had been the first forty Days with God in the Mount, he brought nothing down but the two Tables of the moral Law, as if no other Law had been then intended; but when he found the People fallen into *Egyptian* Idolatry, and worshipping the golden Calf, God then seemeth to have resolved, in order to prevent that Inclination and Proneness of the People, to load them with a Number of religious Rites and Ceremonies, in direct Opposition to the Customs of the *Egyptians*, and of all their idolatrous Neighbours, that they might be kept at the greatest Distance from a Vice to which they seemed to have so strong an Inclination; and from thenceforth he left the Care of the moral Law to the Magistrates, and particularly to the Prophets, which he designed to raise, in a constant Succession, to inculcate the Practice of it.

And hence the Priests more easily fell into that great Mistake, that their Religion had little Concern with Morality, since their Employment lay quite another Way, though altogether about Religion.

V. We farther observe the Capacity, under which Priests acted, both among the *Jews* and Heathens:

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They represented the People to God, and acted in their Name, to make Expiation for their Offences, and reconcile God to them. Their offering of Thanks, and eucharistical Memorials, were all in the Name and for the Behalf of the People; for Priest and Sacrifice are correlatives, and mutually suppose one another. There can be no Priest, where there is nothing to offer; and where any Offering is made to God, that Action constitutes the Person who offereth, so far a Priest.

The Prophets were the Reverse of this, they represented God to the People, and transacted in his Name, preaching Righteousness, revealing God's Will, and making it known to Men, therefore their Sermons so often begin with this solemn Preface—*Thus saith the Lord.*—As the Business of the Priest was to appease the Deity, and reconcile him to Men, so the Business of the Prophet was to reconcile the People to God, by bringing them to Repentance, and a pure and holy Life. The Heathen had also their Prophets and Oracles, their Sibyls, Augurs, and Aruspices, who pretended to explain the Mind of the Gods; but although they pretended to deliver a Message from the Gods to the People, they never meddled with Morality and true Virtue, but merely Ceremonies, and superstitious Rites.

When Prophecy ceased among the *Jews*, to supply the Place thereof, the Synagogue Service was introduced, which was founded on natural Religion, and modelled by the Rules of human Prudence, provided nothing were done inconsistent with the divine Law. The Business of these Assemblies was, to put up their joint Prayers to God, to read and explain the Law, and the whole Will of God, whether made known by Nature or Revelation. The Officers were Teachers who spake in the Name of God, and delivered a Message from him, not by any new Revelation made to them, but by explaining former Revelations,

tions, and pressing the People to be steady to all the divine Precepts, moral and ceremonial, although they gradually declined and sunk into mere Ceremony, Quirks and Quibbles of the Law, and the vain Traditions of their Elders; for which our Saviour frequently reproves the Scribes and Doctors.

The Philosophers, in some Sort, performed the Business of the Prophets, and Sermons of the Synagogue, for they were Teachers and Instructors in Morality. As that was no Part of the established Religion or of the Priests Office, they in some Measure supplied that Defect by their Schools and Writings. They did not pretend to deliver any Message from the Deity or explain his Will from any divine Revelation, but by their Reasonings, and Deductions from Nature, they gathered the Will of the Deity. And they did indeed refine the vulgar Notions of God and Religion, and built Morality on a more rational Foundation, although very imperfectly.

VI. In the last Place, we may observe from the whole Synagogue Service, which was of human and prudential Contrivance; that human Appointments in religious Matters, when not inconsistent with any Law of God, and approved by Law or Custom, are so far from being unlawful, that they are of natural Right and ought to be complied with. Our Saviour's Practice may serve a Christian, to a Demonstration of this Truth, for he not only approved of them by his Presence and Practice; but that he might make a little Alteration in the known outward Order of Religion as was consistent with his own Doctrine, he adopted most of the Methods and Order of the Synagogue into his own Church; and with small Variations Christians have the same Officers, Lessons, public Prayers, Method of receiving Profelytes and Discipline, which when seriously considered, ought to make some Impression on such as boggle so very much at human Institutions in Matters of Religion.

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External Religion, like that of the *Jews*, can only be known by Revelation whether it be grateful to him; but where internal Religion is the principal and almost only Thing required, as among Christians, if that be sincerely observed and Men be truly religious and pious, we have very wrong Notions of God if we think him very nice and scrupulous about the outward Dress, especially since one of Christ's Views was to abolish external Religion, to fix it in the Heart, Mind and Practice, and founded on our rational Part.

CH A P. VII.

Of the Christian PRIESTHOOD.

ACCORDING to the Notion of a Priest under the *Jewish* and Heathen Religion, the Christian admitteth of none but the Mediator *Jesus Christ*. He indeed is called and was a proper Priest in that Sense, although not of the Order of *Aaron*. He had no Right to offer in the Temple, nor did he. But he made an Offering once for all, when he offered himself on the Cross. And from that Offering he is called and was a proper Priest.

The Author to the *Hebrews* applies the words of the Psalmist to Christ, in *Heb. v. 6. Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchizedek*. And Verse 9. *being made perfect*, (or as it should be rendered, *consecrated*) *he became the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him, called of God an High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek*. The Words *ἱερεύς*, which always signify a sacrificing Priest, are here applied to Christ; to denote that he was that kind of Priest, although not of the Order of *Aaron*.

The Offering he made, was himself, *Heb. vii. 27. who need not daily as these High Priests, to offer up*
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Sacrifice first for his own Sins, and then for those of the People; for this he did once when he offered up himself. By this Comparison between Christ and the Jewish Priests, it is beyond Contradiction, that he did that once, which they did daily, but they offered daily, a Sacrifice for Sins; Christ therefore offered once a Sacrifice for Sins, and that Sacrifice was himself. Also in Heb. ix. 14. The Blood of Christ, which through the eternal Spirit offered himself without Spot unto God, shall purge your Consciences from dead Works. Kaḏapā, when joined to Sin, signifieth to cleanse from the Guilt, to remove the Punishment, but not the Power of Sin.

This Sacrifice is never to be repeated, for Verse 28. *Christ was once offered to bear the Sins of many, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second Time without Sin (that is without any Sacrifice for Sin) unto Salvation. And again, Heb. x. 12. This Man after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sin, for ever sat down on the right Hand of God—for by one Offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. —Again, Their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more; now where Remission of these is, there is no more Offering for Sin.*

These Texts are a plain Proof that Christ was a Priest, that he offered himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and that no more Sacrifice is to be offered. By him therefore the whole Law of Sacrifices, Expiations and Attonements, is perfected, compleated and abolished. And of course the whole Order of that Kind of Priesthood. As the Author to the *Hebrews* argueth, if the Priesthood be changed, the Law must be changed also; we by a Parity of Reason may conclude, if the Law be changed, the Priesthood must be changed also. For by that one Act, of Christ's offering himself, the whole Apparatus and Foundation of the ceremonial Law, and of course the whole Order of Priesthood, which was founded on it, is intirely taken away.

The same Author to the *Hebrews*, and indeed the whole Tenor of the Gospel, proves, that the Design of Christ was to antiquate the whole ceremonial Law, which I think needeth no Proof to any that hath read the Gospel. It may then not be remote from our Purpose, to consider what Law and Religion he established in the Place thereof.

God designing to secure the *Jews* from the Idolatry of their Neighbours, and to preserve them unmixt with any other People, that the *Messias* might be known to be of them according to former Prophecies; gave them a multiplicity of Rites and Ceremonies, in direct Opposition to those of their Neighbours. Such Statutes as depended on the sole Pleasure of the Law-giver, which had no Goodness in their own Nature, but derived their Worth from the Will of the Superior. For which Reason they were called a Yoke and a Burden. And the Prophet *Ezekiel* telleth us expressly that God gave them Precepts that were not good, that is, that had no internal Goodness founded on the Nature of the Things themselves.

When all that was typical in these was fulfilled, Christ introduced a rational Religion, the Goodness of whose Precepts was founded in the Things themselves. All the Pomp and Solemnity of the ceremonial Worship, was reduced to a Plainness and Simplicity suitable to that of the Divine Person who established it. There are now no typical Representations, nor mysterious or symbolical Rites, no bodily Cleanings or Purifications. The whole of Religion is converted from the outward to the inner Man, from positive Rules to Laws of eternal Truth and Goodness. From Rites and Ceremonies, to solid Virtue, and the weighty Matters of the Law.

All the Precepts of Christ's Religion are either such as are founded on the Nature of Things themselves, or such as are natural Consequences of, and have a natural Connexion with the Relation Christians bear

to Christ the Mediator and Founder of their Religion, and with the Offices which he hath performed for Mankind.

This is the most natural Meaning of that Prophecy made in *Jer. xxxi. 34.* which is applied to the Gospel Times, *Heb. viii. 10.* and *x. 16.* that then *God would write his Law in their Hearts*, that is, it should be a rational Law, such Precepts as, in the Words of Dr. *Hammond*, “ should be most perfectly agreeable to all
 “ rational Minds; and there should be no Need of
 “ such Pains in teaching what they are to do, as
 “ *Moses* under the Law, (which constituted many
 “ outward Performances, which had no such inward
 “ Goodness in them, as that a Man’s own Reason
 “ should prompt him to them, and approve them
 “ as best and most excellent, if they were not taught
 “ by the Lawmaker, and kept still in their Minds
 “ by Instruction in the Law) but the Precepts now
 “ proposed being so agreeable to human Reason,
 “ they shall be found written by every Man in his
 “ own Heart (as it were) able of themselves to ap-
 “ prove themselves to Men.”

And this is also agreeable to the only Description of *θνησκεία*, religious Worship, in the New Testament, *James i. 27.* *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widow in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World*, that is, Religion under the Gospel is Charity and Purity of Life.

The Design, and general Meaning of Religion, is the same in all Ages, and among all People, that is to say, the Method Men make Use of to please God, and recommend themselves to his Favour. This Method among the *Jews* was chiefly, and among the Heathens altogether restrained, to such outward Expressions of Piety, as were exercised immediately in what related to the Worship of God, in Rites and Ceremonies, which they thought were the most grate-

ful Things to him. But by the Tenor of the Gospel, that Method is changed into inward Purity of Mind, and Life, which consisteth in such a Sense of God as prevaileth upon Men to be devout, righteous, just, charitable, beneficent, merciful, and virtuous, in every respect.

Religion is now longer confined to the outward Expressions of Devotion, (although they be also required) but it regulates the Thoughts, Affections, and Desires, it includeth all moral Virtues, which are made an essential Part of that Method whereby we must recommend ourselves to God's Favour. It consisteth no longer in any particular Method of outward Adoration or Ceremony, but in that inward Sense and Veneration Men must have of the Deity, which shall prevail upon them to be truly and sincerely virtuous. This is our Saviour's Meaning when he told the *Samaritan* Woman, that the true Worshipers should worship God in Spirit and in Truth. The outward Expressions of this inward Sense are left to every Man's Conscience, provided he giveth no Offence to the innocent and lawful Customs of his Country.

In a Word, as Religion under the Gospel is reduced from Symbols and Ceremonies to a rational Scheme, it may be ranked under these two Heads. 1. The eternal Laws of moral Virtue improved and explained. 2. The Duties which flow from the Relation Christians bear to Christ.

1. The eternal Laws of moral Virtue, which comprehend our Duty to God, as Faith, Trust, Fear, Love, Honour, Esteem, and Obedience, expressed by Prayers, Praises, Thanksgivings, a conscientious Submission to his Laws, and Repentance where we transgress. Our Duty to our Neighbour, which comprehendeth all the social Virtues of Justice, Charity, Truth, Candor, and Mercy. And our Duty to ourselves, as Diligence, Temperance, and a Command

over all our Passions, Appetites, and Inclinations. All these are Parts of the Christian Religion, strongly enjoined by it.

2. The Duties which flow from the Relation Christians bear to Christ, supposing him to be their Redeemer, Mediator, and Lawgiver. From that Relation necessarily results, their Obligation to Faith, Trust, Love, Gratitude, and Obedience to him. And besides these necessary Duties, the Christian Religion hath also two plain and simple positive Ordinances, and two only, generally called Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The first is the Form of Admission of a Proselyte into that Religion; which being necessary to all Societies under some Form, our Saviour adopted an old Ceremony, well known to the *Jews*, and continued by him as naturally representing that Purity of Life, and laying aside the Filth of Sin, required as a necessary Condition in every Christian.

The other is designed as a solemn Commemoration of the great Instance our Saviour gave to Men of his Love to them, and seemeth also borrowed from the Practice of the *Jews*, and applied to the Christian Religion; with a new Signification.

For as Christ was both our High Priest and Sacrifice, and it had always been the Custom of such as offered Sacrifice, to eat Part of it, by which they were thought to be Partakers of all the Benefits obtained by that Sacrifice, and to have Communion with the Deity to whom it was offered; and as our Saviour resolved, that all his Followers should have some stated Memorial of his Sacrifice of himself, which he offered for them all: he consecrated the Bread and Wine, which used to be made use of at the Paschal Supper after the Passover by the *Jews*, to be such a Memorial, that such Christians as with a true Faith, Repentance, and Devotion, should eat of that Bread and drink that Wine, as a Memorial of him, should

as surely partake of all the Benefits obtained for them by that Sacrifice, as if they had eaten of the Thing sacrificed, according to the ancient Custom. Hence the partaking of this Memorial is really and truly no Sacrifice, but a Feast upon a Sacrifice, as St. Paul explaineth it to the *Corinthians*, and as *George d'Ataide*, one of the *Portuguese* Divines explained it to the Fathers of the Council of *Trent*, for which Freedom he very hardly escaped a severe Censure from that mistaken and misled Assembly.

If then it be reasonable that a Person admitted to any Society, should be admitted by some Form; a more simple and significative could scarce be found, than Baptism. And if it be highly reasonable that the immense Benefit Christ procured to Mankind, should be remembered, it is not easy to find one more simple and natural to represent what is meant by it, and to keep up a perpetual lively Sense of what he suffered for us, than the Lord's Supper as Christ instituted it, and as the Apostles and true Christians practised it. And to these Actions, seeing they are Parts of Religion, a religious Behaviour is required, and must be joined. Every Thing therefore in Christ's Religion is reduced to a rational and natural Scheme and Order.

As then from the Nature of the *Jewish* and *Heathen* Religion, their Priests ought to be Ministers of holy Things, to represent the People to God, and to make Atonement and Reconciliation for them; so from the Nature of the Christian Religion, it must now appear, that it can have no Priests of that Kind. There is now no Sacrifice to offer, Christ hath done that once for all. There are now no holy Things to attend, in the Sense holy Things were taken by them. All these holy Rites and Ceremonies have ceased of Course, as being useless and superseded, since Symbols must cease when the Things represented by them appear.

But although God, by Christ, be reconciled to Men, Men are not reconciled to their Duty, they are great Strangers to God, Religion and Virtue. The Design of Christianity is to prevail with them to be good and virtuous, holy and unblameable. It then seemeth naturally to require an Order of Men, whose Business and Employment it should be, to use the most prevailing Methods to persuade Men to become such as that Religion requires they should be.

And in Effect, by the Tenor of the Gospel, this is the very Essence of the Office of a Christian Priest. Their Business is to speak to the People in the Name of God, to deliver a Message from him, to strive to reform Mens Lives, to reconcile them to God, by becoming holy as he is holy. They are not the Ministers of the People, but as the judicious Mr. Mede observes, the Ministers of God, of Christ, and of the Gospel, for the Good of the People, to seek and save that which was lost, and to bring Sinners to Repentance. In a Word, they are Persons commissioned by Christ to do every Thing that is proper to instruct Mankind in the whole Will of God, made known by our Saviour and his Apostles, and to conduct them to eternal Happiness, which was indeed the Office of the ancient Prophets, in whose Place they are instituted, and whose Office they now supply, as the Rulers of the Synagogue did in some Sort among the *Jews*.

We never find the *Jews* or Heathens blaming the Apostles for invading the Priests Office, but they preached in the Synagogues, and were treated as Rabbies or Doctors. The Heathens never took them for Priests, but for Philosophers, because the Philosophers were Teachers of Wisdom and Morality. And all the ancient Ministers of Christianity, rather called themselves Philosophers, and distinguished themselves by the Philosophers Habit; they wore their *Pallium*, as Philosophers, but never affected any Thing relating to the Priests.

St. Paul observes this great Difference between the legal and Christian Priesthood, in the Definition which he occasionally giveth of their Offices, *1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.* *Do ye not know that they which minister about holy Things live of the Sacrifice, and they who wait at the Altar are Partakers with the Altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* Where describing the several Ministers by the principal Parts of their Office, he represents the ancient Priests by their ministering about holy Things and waiting at the Altar, but the Christian Ministry by preaching the Gospel.

And that this is really the great Business and Employment of the Gospel Priesthood, is evident to a Demonstration from the original Commission given to the Apostles by their Lord and Master, from whom they derive all their Authority, as it is recorded *Matt. xxviii.* *Go ye and make Disciples of all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.* The solemn Visitation Charge of St. Paul to the Elders at *Ephesus*, is in *Acts xx. 28.* *To take Heed to the Flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers, to feed the Church of God.*

When St. Paul in the most solemn Manner declareth his Faithfulness in the Discharge of his Office, he doth it in these Words, *Acts xx. 26, 27.* *I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole Counsel of God.*

The Rules he prescribeth to *Timothy* and *Titus*, in their ordaining Bishops and Deacons, are, that they should be such as were fitly qualified to teach both by Example and Doctrine. And the particular Rule to *Timothy* for the Discharge of his own Office, *1 Tim. iv. 13.* is, *To give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, to give himself wholly to them.*

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This is the great and laborious Part of their Office, strongly insisted upon in the New Testament, and implieth much more than publick preaching, as the Word is now used in a confined Sense; but all proper Ways of Instruction, by Doctrine, Practice, and Example; by Reading, Conversation, and Catechising; by a watchful Observation of each particular Man's Conduct, and encouraging or reproofing as their Actions demand them, that they may inform and persuade Men of the Principles and Practices of Christianity, and fit them for eternal Salvation.

The Names by which the Gospel Ministers are most usually called in the New Testament, have the same Import, but no Manner of Relation to the Office of the antient Priesthood; the common Titles are taken from the Synagogue, as Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, from the Synagogue *Chazan*, *Presbyter*, and *Diaconus*. The Temple Service, and all its Officers, being abolished, Christ was pleased to model his Church and Officers, as near that Part of the *Jewish* Worship, which was founded on Nature and Reason, as was consistent with his Institution, which was founded on the same Grounds, and that was the Synagogue Service.

The other Names by which the Christian Officers are sometimes called in Scripture, are all of the same Kind, denoting, teaching, and delivering a Message from God, such as Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers, Shepherds, Ambassadors, Stewards, Dispensers of the Mysteries, and Ministers of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 20. *We are (saith St. Paul) Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God.—We then Workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain.*

Our established Church preaches the same Doctrine concerning the Nature and End of her Officers. In the Ordination of a Deacon, the Bishop giveth him
Authority

Authority to execute the Office of a Deacon, which he thus explaineth, to read the Gospel, and to preach the same, if he be thereunto licensed by the Bishop. And in his Charge to the Candidate he explaineth it more fully. That it appertaineth to the Office of a Deacon to assist the Priest in divine Service, and especially in the Distribution of the Holy Communion; to read the Scriptures and Homilies; to instruct the Youth in the Catechism; to baptize, and preach if he be licensed; and to take Care of the sick and poor.

The Priest's Office is described by ministering of Doctrine, Sacraments, and Discipline; and to teach the People with Authority, to remit and retain Sins, and to be a faithful Dispenser of the Word and Sacraments.

The Bishops Office is described almost in the same Words, with this Addition, that he is to be faithful in ordaining; and preaching also, and Discipline, are recommended to him.

C H A P. VIII.

Observations and Reflections on the Christian PRIESTHOOD.

IT deserveth to be considered how it cometh to pass, that the Word *Priest*, among Christians, should be mistaken for a Sacrificer, seeing neither the Import of the Word, nor its Use in the New Testament, signifieth any such Thing.

The Words *Cohen* among the *Hebrews*, *Hiereus* and *Hieropoios* among the *Greeks*, as also *Sacerdos* and *Sacrificus* among the *Latins*, all signify sacrificing Priests, and began even in the early Ages of Christianity, by way of Analogy, to be applied to the Gospel Officers, as being very well known to signify the Ministers of Religion among the *Jews* and *Heathen*. The Christians, it is true, constantly retained the Names

Names of *Episcopus*, *Presbyter*, and *Diaconus*, to express the several Degrees and Orders of their Officers; but the general Name, that included all Orders, was usually *Sacerdotium* and *Hierateia*, Words which had a different Meaning in the Mouth of a Christian, from what they had in that of a *Jew* or *Heathen*. Yet Custom prevailed, and known Names were frequently applied to Functions of a very different Nature, which agreed only in the general Idea of Ministers about Religion.

Their is a sort of Fascination in Words to impose on Men's Understandings; for in Process of Time, this Confusion of Names produced a Confusion of Offices, and People began to look upon Presbyters, who were called *Sacerdotes*, to be sacrificing Priests, as that Word signified. And Priests, Altar, and Sacrifice, being relative Terms, in order to furnish the Priest with them, the Communion Table must be converted into an Altar, and the Memorial of Christ's Sacrifice into a real Sacrifice; and at last the Presbyter having been provided with a Sacrifice and Altar, was believed to be a true sacrificing Priest. Although it was many Years, even as late as the Dregs of Popery, before that Opinion could make its Way into an established Law. That was not done until the Council of *Trent*, which boldly decreed, *Si quis dixerit, Hoc facite in meam commemorationem, Christum non instituisse Apostolos, Sacerdotes; aut non Ordinasse ut ipsi alique Sacerdotes offerrent corpus et Sanguinem suum, Anathema sit.* Sessio vi. Can. 2. Sep. 17, 1562. *sub. Pio II.*

The Fathers of that Council found the Notion of a sacrificing Priest universally believed in the *Roman* Church, and finding also by the Commission which Christ gave the Apostles, that the Office was of a quite different Nature, they were puzzled where to fix on a sufficient Authority for what they thought the highest Honour, and distinguishing Character,

of their Priest; therefore to supply the Defect of our Saviour's Commission, they, by a Power of pressing Words to what use they please, interpreted these Words, *Do this in Remembrance of me*, by these extraordinary ones, *Be ye sacrificing Priests*.

As to the *English Word Priest* retained in all our publick Offices, and in our common Language, it is evidently derived from the Scripture Word *Presbyter*. Our Saxon Ancestors, by a less Change, called it *Preoster*, which we have softened into *Priest*, as the *French* into *Prêtre*, and the *Italians* into *Prete*. No Question but the first Import of these Derivations was the same as that of *Presbyter*, from whence they came, that is, a teaching Officer, acting in God's Name with the People.

As by the Progress of Christianity, and the Alteration of Languages, the antient Name by which our Heathen Ancestors called their sacrificing Priest was either lost, or out of common Use. We in translating the Old Testament, instead of a more proper Word, to answer the *Jewish Cohen* and *Greek Hieres*, have rendered them by the Word *Priest*, which is indeed the Christian Officer; and yet, because the Idea of sacrificing was annexed to it, our Translators, to make a Distinction, have rendered the Word *Presbyter*, from whence *Priest* came, by *Elder*; and by this Means, instead of reducing *Priest* to its original Signification, have continued the Mistake.

It is more surprising that the Communion Table should be mistaken for an Altar, because it hath never any such Name in the whole New Testament, nor is it even mentioned as any way belonging to the Christian Worship. The Word is but once mentioned at all in Relation to Christians, *Heb. xiii. 10. We have an Altar of which they have no Right to eat, who serve at the Tabernacle*. And the Sense is altogether figurative, where Altar is put for the Thing sacrificed upon it, as in that Expression, *Partakers of the Altar*,

Altar, that is, of the Thing sacrificed upon it, the Altar is in this Place the Cross, figuratively put for Christ who was sacrificed on it. And the Allusion is carried on in the same figurative Stile, of which they have no Right to eat, that is, they who stick by the Tabernacle Service have no Right to partake. Our Church hath taken a particular Care to prevent our being imposed upon by that Word, having in all her publick Offices and Liturgy, industriously called the Lord's Table the Communion Table.

And in respect to Sacrifice, we find the Sacrament of our Lord's Death, always in Scripture called a Supper and Communion, but never a Sacrifice; nor is there any mention of any Sacrifice to be offered by any Christian, unless that figurative Expression, whereby our Alms, Praise, and Thanksgivings, are called Sacrifices; and by the same Figure, not only the Officers, but every Christian, is called a Priest or Sacrificer.

II. From the Genius and Nature of the Christian Religion and Priesthood, we see the gross Mistake and Impiety of the *Romish* Doctrines, whose Guides endeavour to bring us back to the antiquated *Jewish* symbolical Religion, by recalling us to one as ceremonial and intricate as theirs; and introducing a blasphemous Sacrifice of Christ's Body, his living Body, contrary to all the solemn Declarations in the New Testament, that he was once offered, and is no more to be repeated. And although the principal End of the Gospel be to induce Men to the Practice of solid Virtue, and internal Holiness, they have so far mistaken or perverted its Design, as instead thereof, to substitute innumerable Commutations of Penances, Pilgrimages, Indulgencies, and such outward bodily Exercises, as have quite outdone the *Jewish* Rites; translating the Religion of Christ from the inward to the outward Man, from the Spirit to the Flesh, from the Soul to the Body.

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Christ's Religion knoweth no positive Ordinances, but the two Sacraments; but they have added very great Numbers, founded on that uncertain and changeable Rule Tradition; a strong Caution to us, to keep close to the written Word of God, our only authentick Commission, since if once we deviate from that Guide, we shall find no Bounds to stop the giddy Imagination, until we find ourselves bewildered in a Wood of Errors and Superstition. As the *Romish* Doctors, who have verified in themselves, the Re-proof our Saviour the gave Pharisees, of worshipping God in vain, by teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.

I am sorry to find some of our own Profession fallen into an Error of the same Kind; whether misled by the Confusion of Names, or by taking some Expressions of the Antients literally, which can be true only in an analogical Sense; yet so it is, that they have endeavoured to represent the Christian Priest as a real Sacrificer, and would persuade themselves that the Lord's Supper is a real Sacrifice, and the Communion Table an Altar, that the Priest offereth a Sacrifice thereon. It is in vain for them to soften the Expression, by calling it a commemorative Sacrifice, for that giveth still the Idea of a real Sacrifice, and so they understand it. It is indeed the Remembrance or Memorial of a real Sacrifice, and to make it any more is to have very wrong Notions both of the Nature of the Christian Religion and Priesthood; such a Notion, however explained, hath too direct a Tendency to draw Men off from the Spirit to the Letter; to introduce again a symbolical Religion, which Christ came to annul; and to soften the Way to Popery, which is the most barefaced Abuse of the Christian Religion. But this Hazard do all Men run who go beyond their Commission, and use Words not to be found in the Word of God, which is their only Rule to keep them from Error.

III.

III. Some of our own Divines have fallen into another Mistake: They take it for granted, that the Orders of the Christian Priesthood are derived from those of the Aaronical, that Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, answer the High-Priest, Priests, and Levites. I hope by this Time, we are satisfied, that they have no Relation one to another; that the Christian Priests are Successors of the Prophets, and borrow their Names, and the general Design of their Office, from the Synagogue; their Business is to declare and explain the whole Will of God made known by Nature or Revelation. Now such Doctrines and Expressions as derive them from the *Jewish* Orders of the Temple, have too great a Tendency to lead People into a Mistake about the Nature of their Office, and to encourage an external Religion, quite contrary to the Design of Christianity.

As I before observed, there is a bewitching Power in Words, when not carefully heeded. Confusion of Words create a Confusion of Ideas. Men are led into Opinions by the wrong Use of Words. The only Way to prevent these Consequences, is to keep close to the Scripture Terms in all dubious Cases; that alone is the authentick Commission of a Christian Priest, and when he deviateth from it, he may deliver that in the Name of God, for which God never gave him any Authority. And he needeth not be told the Heinousness of such a Crime.

IV. As the Christian Priest is a Successor of the Prophets, to deliver a Message from God to the People; and as that Message is contained in the Scripture, it manifestly followeth how exceeding cautious he ought to be, that he deliver nothing but what he can with a good Conscience, and full Assurance, preface with this solemn Assertion, *Thus saith the Lord*. If this Caution were carefully observed, we should have no doubtful Points, conjectural Opinions, or little Party Tenets, preached with an Air of Authority.

ity, as undoubted Messages from the Lord of Hosts. Mysteries of State, and factious Discourses about Things not revealed nor committed to their Charge, would be banished the Pulpit, and Books of Divines. The substantial Matters of Religion are plain and open, they are Subjects wherein Men cannot easily mistake the Mind of God, and are of great Importance. In them we have a large Field to expatiate upon; and there are many vicious Lives to reclaim, enough to employ the Time and Pains of any Christian Priest.

Among such Things as are certainly Truths, there is a very wide Difference as to their Importance. Such Truths as have little or no Tendency to answer the great End of Christianity, by making Men better, need not be insisted on with a Zeal equal to what is required in more weighty Matters. If Men can be prevailed upon to be good and virtuous, provided they hold the Foundation, which is Christ; Mistakes or Errors in smaller Matters will not exclude them from Salvation. This Consideration taken from a true Understanding of the Nature of Christianity and its Priesthood, would serve to cool Men's intemperate Zeal for lesser Things, and fix its Warmth where the Gospel designeth it should be placed.

For Instance. It is a certain Truth, that the outward Expressions of civil Respect, according to the Customs of each Country, are not only lawful, but decent, expedient, and in some Sense a Duty. Yet if a Quaker, or any other Man, have an unconquerable Prejudice against shewing that Respect by uncovering his Head; it would be a mistaken Zeal to dwell with much Earnestness on that Subject, to lay mighty Stress on the acknowledging that Truth, or to declare the Man an Heretick, or not fit for the Converse of Christians; because if he be in other Respects a good and pious Christian, that Error will have little Influence on his eternal State. And are not many of the Party Opinions among Christians,

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which have been argued and disputed, with an Heat and Zeal as if the Vitals of Christianity were concerned in the Affair, much of the same Nature? Such Disputes when managed with too much Zeal, are Proofs of the Zealot's Ignorance of the true Nature of Christianity, the Importance of Things, and the Nature and Office of a Christian Priest. This is the too common Fault of polemick Divines, as the Writers of Controversy are called, who suffer their Zeal to run away with their Reason, and degenerate into Passion and very unchristian Uncharitableness.

On this Subject I must observe another Mistake, not indeed of such evil Consequence, but which however is wrong, that when Men of a luxuriant or warm Fancy, have chosen to treat of any Virtue or Vice, they are too apt to run into Comparisons, and depreciate other Virtues to exalt their particular Subject, and handle Vices at the same rate; every Virtue they happen to treat of, is the Perfection of Religion, and every Vice, the most absolutely damning Sin. It requireth Judgment and Consideration to avoid this Fault, to weigh Matters, and give every Thing its proper Force, and check the Excursions of an heated Imagination.

It is equally faulty for a Preacher, to anatomize Vices, little known and perhaps less practised by his Hearers, which often instead of preventing, teaches them Sins they were Strangers to, as by starting Objections against Errors, which the People can understand better than the Answers given to them, raiseth Scruples and teacheth such Errors rather than guards the Audience against them. These things should be maturely examined, the Wants of the People studied, and the Discourses adapted to their real Wants who are to be informed and instructed. A Discourse proper for one Audience may be very improper for another. We should therefore chuse them with Judgment and Discretion.

V. I know no Consideration of greater Force to prevail with the Ministers of the Gospel, to be cau-

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tious and faithful in the Discharge of their Office, than the near Relation they bear to God and Christ. *John xx. 21. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* That is, as Christ was the Delegate of the Father, and treated with the World in his Name, so they are Christ's Delegates, treat with the World in his Name, and transact Affairs by an Authority derived from him as King in his mediatorial Kingdom. Or as St. Paul wordeth it, *1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. They are Stewards of the Mysteries of God; moreover it is required in Stewards that a Man be found faithful.* God the Father looketh upon them as co-workers with himself and his Christ, as Persons sent in his Name for the eternal Welfare of their Fellow Creatures, to open their Understandings, improve their Judgments, bring them to a Resemblance of their Maker, and prepare them for an happy Immortality.

To this Purpose he hath by his Law fenced and guarded their Persons, as those of publick Ambassadors should be by the Laws of Nature and Nations, by assuring us that he taketh an Indignity done to them in the Execution of their Office as done immediately to himself. *Luke x. 16. He that beareth you beareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me.* Which St. Paul repeateth *1 Thessa. iv. 8. He that despiseth, despiseth not Man but God.* And our Saviour with an Affelevation, *John xiii. 20. Verily verily I say unto you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

It is true, he foretells them, when he sent them out, that they should meet with scurvy Treatment from the World, that they should be mocked, derided, persecuted, and oppressed for their Message sake. That he sent them forth as Sheep among ravening Wolves; but he threateneth a severe Vengeance against such as should presume to treat them after that despiseful Manner, *Matt. x. 14. Whosoever shall not receive you, nor bear your Words; when ye depart out*

of that House or City, shake off the Dust of your Feet; verily I say unto you it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Day of Judgment, than for that City.

And let no Man imagine that these Things were said to the Apostles, as extraordinary Officers, who had their Mission immediately from Christ, and therefore do not belong to the present Ministry. For they were indeed spoken to the Apostles, but to them in their publick Capacity, as they were standing Officers, not in their personal, but ministerial Capacity. In the first Commission given to these same Apostles, *Matt. xxviii.* Christ promiseth to be *with them to the End of the World*, which as it regards their Office, can be true in no Sense, unless it have Regard to their Successors.

And the Apostles themselves understood their Master in that Sense, since they appointed Elders in every Church, *Acts xiv. 23.* And *Titus (i. 5.)* is commanded by *St. Paul* to appoint Elders in every City of *Crete*. And they that were so ordained by the Apostles are said to be *made Overseers by the Holy Ghost, to feed the Church of God, Acts xx. 28.* And as they that were sent by the Apostles, are also said to be sent or appointed by God, so in order to prevent any Ambiguity or Mistake our Saviour seemeth designedly to include them; for he doth not barely say to the Apostles, he that receiveth you receiveth me, but, *he that receiveth whomsoever I shall send*, comprehending by that Expression all that should be sent in all Ages by Authority derived from him. *John xiii. 20.*

The Duties of a Clergyman that follow from this Trust and Relation cannot be better expressed than in the Words of *St. Paul's Exhortation to Timothy, 1 Ep. iv. 12.* *To be an Example of the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity; and to give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Doctrine, to meditate on these Things, and to give themselves wholly to them, that in doing these Things*

they may both save themselves and them that bear them.
 This is the true Design and Intent of the Christian Priesthood; this is the Substance of the Charge given at Ordination to every Christian Priest, and this is the proper and only Method to answer the End of our Office in St. Paul's Sense, when he telleth us, that *we are Ambassadors for Christ, as although God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God,* that is, to prevail with Men to recommend themselves to God by holy and unblameable Lives. And St. Paul teacheth *Timothy* that this great End may be obtained by him, if he took Care, to set them a good Example, to instruct them diligently, and spend his whole Time therein.

I must say it for the Honour of the Clergy of this Kingdom, that they are generally Men of Learning and of a decent Behaviour. Few is the Number of such as expose their Office or Persons, by any Scandal in their Life and Behaviour. They are also generally punctual in discharging all the Parts of their Office which are enjoined by the Laws of the Land.

Under the Care and Inspection of such a Clergy, it would seem a Paradox, to say that, Vice, Irreligion, Profaneness, and even Infidelity and Atheism should spread and gain Ground. Yet it is a melancholy Truth. We see it, we feel it, we are troubled and concerned at it. It deserveth our serious Consideration, whether it be in our Power, to contribute any Thing to put a Stop to it. At least it deserveth our Enquiry whether by any Imprudence or Neglect of ours, we have given, in any Measure, an Handle or Occasion for it, that so far as we are able we may remove it.

The Cry against the Clergy hath grown up together with the Neglect and Contempt of Religion, and People will always believe that a popular and general Odium, must be founded on some good, or at least specious Reason. It would be an invidious Task to enquire

enquire into the secret Motives of such Persons as foment and encourage such popular Cries: But it will be always safe to examine ourselves, our Actions and Intentions, whether such an Enquiry shall end in the Comfort of a good Conscience, upon finding ourselves innocent, or in amending what is amiss, upon discovering any Fault or Remissness.

In an Enquiry of this Nature, our proper Way will be to compare our Lives with the Rules and Nature of our Office, and try whether we have been faithful to the Commission entrusted and enjoined to us, and have discharged it according to the Intention of him who committed it to us. For if we measure the Discharge of our Office, by what the national Laws have made our Duty; although we may justify ourselves before Men, I am afraid we shall scarce approve ourselves either to God or our own Conscience. *St. Paul's* Exhortation to *Timothy* runneth in quite a different Strain, and expresseth a Zeal, a Labour, a Diligence, which will exercise all the Faculties and Time of the whole Man. Let *St. Paul* himself be our Copy, and let us ask ourselves, have we exerted as warm a Zeal, managed with an equal Prudence and Diligence, to preserve Christians from Immorality and Infidelity, as he did to recover Men from Infidelity to true Christianity?

A Zeal of that Kind will not be content with preaching in the modern Sense: It will enquire into the Humours, Inclinations, Lives and Behaviour of every particular Person under our Charge: It will follow them home to their Houses, and discourse them familiarly and with Affection, in a Style suited to the Level of their Capacities, take proper and prudent Occasions to reprove as well as instruct them; and set them a Pattern of Christian Behaviour, by our Example of Piety, Humility, Mildness, Moderation and Godly Simplicity; such a Behaviour to all Persons, of any Sect or Denomination, will first incline them

to be good Men, and then prepare them to listen to your Advice in such controverted Points wherein they differ from you, as shall end in a thorough Conviction and Conversion, better than all the Methods of Dispute and Discouragement, which have been too long practised to little good Purpose, but rather to exasperate Mens Minds, and stop their Ears to the wisest Discourses.

It is an experienced Truth that Examples are the most effectual and convincing Preachers. But if People observe the Minister to discharge his Duty, cursorily, by Manner of Acquit, without Life or Zeal, or to live in Luxury, Idleness and Ease, to vie with Men of Fortune, in Table, Dress or Attendance; to set their Minds more on their Revenues, and making a Fortune, than on the Discharge of their Duty, or to spend that same Revenue in what the World calleth good Living, or in raising a Family, which was designed to furnish him with Ability to do good Works, he may blame himself if he sink in their Esteem, and if his whole Order bear Part of the Censure, it is, and always was the Way of the World to pass such Judgements, and we must not pretend to model Mens Minds to our particular Inclinations. Our living in a Manner which the World calleth decent, although without publick Scandal, will neither preserve us from the Censure of God nor Men.

People with great Justice expect more from a Clergyman than from another Man; although they are Men and subject to all human Infirmities, yet they are supposed to have been at more than ordinary Pains to weed out these Infirmities, to correct all their Passions, and bring them to a just Subordination to Reason and Religion. No Study of Morality and Divinity will furnish Arguments to reform the World, if they cannot first reform the Man himself.

St. Paul supposes that People have an Allowance to be scandalled at the Doctrine of an immoral Man, when

when *Rom. ii. 21.* he observes, that the Name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by such Preachers as taught others, but did not teach themselves. The Heathen Philosophers who made Profession of teaching Virtue, were supposed to be Men that practised what they taught, and when it fell out otherwise, Peoples Expectations being disappointed, they ridiculed both them and their Doctrine.

A Clergyman's Practice is an Authority to his People, a small Liberty in him is improved by them into a Licence. If he cannot command his Passions, they will retort all his Reproofs and Arguments, and in the Scripture Language, bid the Physician heal himself.

No Doubt but there are many other Reasons which arise from the Vices of the People, that occasion both their own Profaneness, and their Splendour against the Clergy. But my Design is only to hint at such as possibly may arise from ourselves, and therefore in our own Power to remedy. And I know no more effectual Way to discover such, than by strict Enquiry into the Nature of our Office, and comparing our Practice, with that which God hath made our Duty. And I am convinced that God hath contrived it in such a Manner, as to prevent all Inconveniences, provided we can be prevailed upon to do our Part, and he hath promised to be with us, in order to assist and bless our well-meant Endeavours, to the End of the World. And to him let us commit our Success, and be well assured, that while we worthily discharge our Duty, he will preserve a Church and People to himself, in spite of all the Malice of evil disposed Men, and of all invisible Powers.

F I N I S.